

*Terrae amissae: A comparative study of
Southwest Germany and Transylvania in the
mid-third century AD*

Volume I of II: Text

Evan Sterling Scherer

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School of History, Classics, and Archaeology
Newcastle University

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Abstract

This thesis is an exercise in archaeological interpretation of the abandonment of frontier areas of the Roman Empire during the mid-third century AD. The regions of Southwest Germany and Transylvania are chosen due to four critical factors. Both are frontier zones beyond the traditional river boundaries of the Empire. They not only had a large military presence, but also urban and rural settlements, providing a diverse assemblage of sites to examine.

Furthermore, both regions were ceded by Roman authority during this period. Consequently, this has led to circular argumentation in interpretation of the latest Roman phases of occupation. Similarities of these regions has warranted brief discussion in the past. However, this is the first study to exhaustively work through the data both in German and Romanian.

This period of history is crucial in the transition of the Roman World into Late Antiquity, but there is little that can be proven in the archaeological narrative. In general, there is a paucity of literary sources, yet these have led the narrative not only for these regions, but for the Empire as a whole. This thesis seeks to examine published material in a forensic manner, documenting evidence for activity and abandonment during the period, highlighting what is known and what is implied across multiple languages and academic traditions. Additionally, the period numismatic and epigraphic assemblages for each region are set against their respective general trends.

The result is a thorough assessment of the limits of our understanding of this crucial period based on the archaeological evidence as it exists rather than an interpretation of the archaeological material via the literary sources. The overarching aim is to highlight the historical and methodological pitfalls that have distorted discussion of both areas to show how further studies of this period might better utilize the physical evidence.

In memory of Bernard Louis Scherer (19/1/1927 – 19/5/2014),

Dylan Martin Sterling (5/4/1992 - 15/5/2014),

and

Atom Harley Lisi (17/12/1982 - 25/12/2017)

Sit vobis terra levis

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Abbreviations

- AAusgrBadWürt – *Archäologische Ausgrabungen in Baden-Württemberg*
- ACMIT – *Anuarul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice, secția pentru Transilvania Cluj-Napoca*
- ActaMusNapoca – *Acta Musei Napocensis*
- ActaMusPorol – *Acta Musei Porolissensis*
- AE – *L'Année épigraphique*
- AH – *Archäologie in Hessen*
- AISC -*Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasicii, Universitatea "Regele Ferdinand I" din Cluj*
- AKorrBl – *Archäologische Korrespondenzblätter*
- AJahrBay – *Das archäologische Jahr in Bayern*
- ANRW – *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welts* Berlin/New York: De Gruyter
- Apulum – *Acta Musei Apulensis*
- ATÉ - *Alsófehérmegyei Történeti, Régészeti és Természettudományi Egylet Évkönyve*
- BAR BS – *British Archaeological Reports, British Series* Oxford: Archaeopress
- BAR IS – *British Archaeological Reports, International Series* Oxford: Archaeopress
- BayVgBl – *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter*
- BerBayDenkmPfl – *Bericht der Bayerischen Bodenkmalpflege*
- BerRGK – *Bericht der Römisch-germanischen Kommission des Deutschen archäologisches Instituts*
- Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis – *Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis* Alba Iulia: Muzeul Național al Unirii
- Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis – *Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis* Cluj-Napoca: Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei
- Bibliotheca Musei Porolissensis – *Bibliotheca Musei Porolissensis* Zalău: Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Artă Zalău
- BICS S– *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement*
- BJb – *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn*
- BSocNumRom – *Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române*
- CCA – *Cronică Cercetărilor Arheologice*
- CIL – *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
- Collection Moneta – *Collection Moneta* Moneta: Wetteren

CRSCRCR – *Coins from Roman sites and collections of Roman coins from Romania* Editura Mega: Cluj-Napoca

EphemNapoc – *Ephemeris Napocensis*

FBerBadWürt – *Forschungen und Berichte zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg* Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag

FMRD – *Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Deutschland* Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann

Frankfurter Archäologische Schriften – *Frankfurter Archäologische Schriften* Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt

FuBerBadWürt – *Fundberichte aus Baden-Württemberg*

FuBerHessen – *Fundberichte aus Hessen*

Ghid al monumentelor arheologice din Dacia Porolissensis – *Ghid al monumentelor arheologice din Dacia Porolissensis* Zalău: Muzeul Județean de Istorie și artă

IBR – *Inscriptiones Baivariae Romanae*

IDR – *Inscripțiile Daciei Romane* București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România

ILD – *Inscriptiones Latinae Daciae* București: Editura Academiei Române

JbRGZM – *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*

JRA – *Journal of Roman Archaeology*

JRA SS – *Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series*

JRS – *Journal of Roman Studies*

Limesforschungen – *Limesforschungen* Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag/Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern

Marisia – *Marisia. Studii și materiale. Arheologie, istorie, etnografie*

MatCercA – *Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice*

Materialhefte zur Archäologie in Baden-Württemberg – *Materialhefte zur Archäologie in Baden-Württemberg* Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag

Materialien zur römisch-germanischen Keramik – *Materialien zur römisch-germanischen Keramik* Bonn: Verlag Dr. Rudolf Habelt

ORL – *Der obergermanisch-raetischer Limes des Römerreichs* Leipzig: Von Sarwey

Patrimonium Archaeologicum Transylvanicum – *Patrimonium Archaeologicum Transylvanicum* Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega

RCRF – *Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautores* Bonn: Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautores

RSO – *Die römischen Steininschriften des Odenwaldes*

RSOR – *Die römischen Steininschriften des Odenwaldes und seiner Randlandschaften*

SaalbJb – *Saalburg Jahrbuch*

Saalburg-Schriften – *Schriften des Saalburgmuseums* Saalburgmuseum: Bad Homburg v.d.H.

Sargetia – *Sargetia. Acta Musei Regionalis Devensis*

Schriften des Frankfurter Museums für Vor- und Frühgeschichte – *Schriften des Frankfurter Museums für Vor- und Frühgeschichte* Frankfurt am Main: Archäologisches Museum

SCIV(A) – Studii de istorie veche (și arheologie)

ZPE – *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Part One: Framing the Study

1. Introduction

This thesis is an exercise in archaeological interpretation on the theme of abandonment and collapse in two frontier regions of the Roman Empire during the mid-third century AD (238-275). It tests the validity of established narratives in the regions of Southwest Germany, which consisted of parts of *Germania Superior* and *Raetia*, and that part of Transylvania which consisted of the northern sector of *Dacia* (fig. 1.1) Part of the larger ‘Crisis of the Third Century’, this period encapsulates the final decades of Roman control of these two regions.¹ The regions are selected for the study for three key reasons; first, as part of frontier provinces, second, the fact that both are considered to have been abandoned sometime in the 260s-270s, and third, the availability of military, urban, and rural sites to examine. Further, themes in the ‘crisis’ narrative occur in both regions; barbarian invasion via the Alemanni in Southwest Germany and the Carpi in Transylvania and abandonment and retreat.

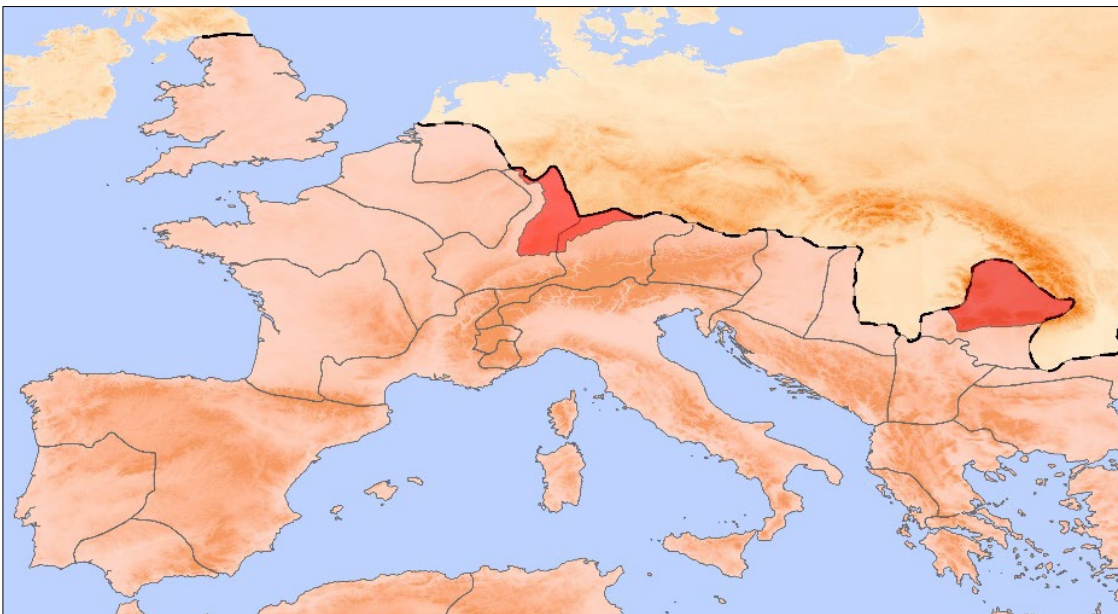


Figure 1. 1: The Roman Empire in Europe during the third century AD. The survey areas of Southwest Germany and Transylvania highlighted in red.

1.1 Third century problems

The thesis works through source material from what is one of the most difficult periods in Roman history to interpret archaeologically. It has long been recognized that archaeological interpretation of the mid-third century is mired with circular argumentation and imprecise dating criteria (Noeske 1996; Kortüm 1996: 38-44; Heising 2008, 99-109; Witschel 2011, 40-

¹ See section 2.1 for debate of the term ‘crisis’ in reference to the third century. In general, there is a growing trend in English language literature since Charanis (1975) to look at the period as one of transition. The period is commonly referred to as ‘Die Soldatenkaiserzeit’, or time of the soldier emperors in German literature and as ‘anarhia militară’, or the military anarchy in Romanian literature.

44; Heeren 2016). In practice, however, this critical admission of problems with the data varies from region to region in the Roman World. This is due in part to a drop in the quantity of diagnostic material culture and the ability to date it with any precision. The result is material culture that can only be broadly dated to the period. In most cases this is all that is available to date sequences in a relatively short period of around fifty years. The phasing of archaeological sites is inherently ‘fuzzy’ due to the calibration of a number of different date ranges from the material assemblage (Reece 1976; Millett 1981, 526). However, this inherent ‘fuzziness’ becomes amplified with the material culture of the third century (Millett 1981, 526). Further, as the century advances, it sees a drop in coin circulation attributed to a lowered silver content and hyperinflation (Crawford 1975). The end of the epigraphic habit also seems to occur on an Empire-wide basis during the period (Mrozek 1973, 116). Consequently, a reliance on the literary evidence, which stresses that the Empire was victim to invasion, civil war, and economic catastrophe is employed as substitution for the lack of high-resolution data and as an explanation for it. (Millett 1981, 525-527).

Scientific dating has advanced considerably, and in the scope of this study this is especially true of dendrochronological dating of Roman sites in Southwest Germany. Some 100 dated samples are known from the region (Reuter 2012, 320-322). Unfortunately, only three of these are relevant to the survey period and none of these push the dating of sites later than other material would stress. Further, Millett (1981, 528) warns that in extreme cases, the felling date might considerably pre-date the deposition and/or installation of the wooden sample, bringing its validity as a source of precision dating into question. Thus, a pattern of circular argumentation emerges whereby the archaeological evidence takes a secondary role to the historical narrative.

Despite the inherent problems, interest in the archaeology of the third century has seen a resurgence since the publication of Witschel’s (1999) survey of the Roman West. Studies have been thematic, covering topics such as the breakaway Gallic Empire (Fischer 2012), transition and urbanism (Schatzmann et al. 2011; Brassous and Quevedo 2015), iconography on coinage (Manders 2012), hoarding (Haupt 2001), and the concept of crisis (Bowman et al. 2005; Heckster et al. 2007). There is a slow but steady movement towards embracing the problematic nature of the archaeology rather than shrouding it, but a tendency to fall back on the historical narrative when all else fails is still prevalent (Scherer 2017). However, it remains the case that no large-scale regional survey has been undertaken that focuses on ‘crisis’ and addresses data on a site by site basis, even in the much-discussed frontier zones of the Empire. Due to their location on the periphery of the Empire, these areas by default

would be the most vulnerable to barbarian invasion, civil war and usurpation, and economic catastrophe. In advancing the first regional survey of such data, this thesis will address some of the fundamental roadblocks in the archaeological interpretation of the mid-third century.

1.2 Different Chronologies, different regions, similar problems

Before moving further in the thesis, it is important to look at the end of Roman Britain in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. This period in Roman Britain has suffered from problems germane to Southwest Germany and Transylvania in the mid-third century, notably reliance on historical interpretation and circular argumentation (Gerrard 2013, 5). However, scholars of Roman Britain have created theoretical frameworks by applying critical analysis of the archaeological record to in order to push the dialogue further, and thus offers a paradigm for advancing methodological approaches to the mid-third century.

Historically, the date of either the usurpation of Constantine III in 407 or the Honorian Rescript of 410 has been given for the end of Roman administration in Britain (Esmonde Cleary 1989, 137-138; Gerrard 2013, 7). Furthermore, a drop in coinage from 378 onwards, followed by a complete cessation ca. 395-402 means that many of the latest phases of Roman activity on sites are impossible to date with any accuracy (Kent 1979; Millett 1990, 219). This has led to interpretation that many of the local ceramic industries would have gone out of production at around this time, compounding the poverty of datable material (Fulford 1979). The resulting lack of datable contexts created a scenario where material was often attributed to the early Anglo-Saxon period on the basis of historical interpretations rather than stratigraphic evidence (Millett 1990, 219-221; Gerrard 2013, 184-187). Thus, early questions about the qualities of the end of Roman rule and the continuation (or lack thereof) of the Roman way of life was largely centred on towns (Frere 1966; Wachter 1995, 408-421; Reece 1980; 1992). Debate focused on whether or not there was a continuation of 'town life', that is, people living in a similar manner as before the supposed collapse, or 'life in towns', the mere presence of some habitation of some structures (Wachter 1995, 408). Though some sites, such as the temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath, the amphitheatre at Cirencester, the baths basilica at Wroxeter, and *insula XXVIII* at *Verulamium* showed indication of occupation into the advanced fifth century, on the whole much of the evidence indicates that Roman towns were largely abandoned (Esmonde Cleary 1989, 146-157; Wachter 1995, 421).

Partly because of the ambiguities and gaps in the archaeological record and the poor quality and paucity of material, a range of very different theoretical approaches have been employed to interpret this difficult period. The first major analytical work on the period argued for a taxation crisis beginning in the later fourth century that led to an end of Roman life that was

‘nasty, brutish, and short’, with the disappearance of ‘Roman’ culture during the fifth century (Esmonde Cleary 1989, 161). This developed into two strands of argumentation; the abrupt end of Roman cultural practices, which were eschewed once the administration was absent (Faulkner 2000) versus a continuation of Roman cultural norms on some level, especially in the area of modern-day Wales (Dark 1994; 2000). However, recent scholarship has taken more nuanced approaches by critical re-examination of the evidence to in both qualitative and quantitative fashion. This has been expressed as a period of transition rather than severe calamity. Gerrard (2013, 276) asserts that in the lowlands of the province, a long transition over centuries culminated in a series of events that saw Roman society supplanted by Germanic warrior culture in the mid-fifth century, facilitated by the martialization of the elites during the fourth century. Further, both Wilmott (2000) and Collins (2012) argue for a long transition in the frontier region of Hadrian’s Wall as well, as the local garrisons also retained their martial nature and took on a ‘warband’ type of existence.

The critical and analytic aspect to discussions of the late fourth and fifth centuries in Britain is lacking in many continental studies of the third century. However, these British examples indicate that a paradigm for more complex interpretation is possible with difficult material. This thesis seeks to offer more of a model of the transformation of Southwest Germany and Transylvania than has previously been advanced.

1.3 Aims and objectives

Having looked at general third century problems and approaches to similar issues in other areas, it is now possible to explore the aims and objectives of the thesis. There are three main aims. The first and primary aim is to test the validity of historic and current narratives of the final period of Roman occupation in both regions, especially as they pertain to the effects of barbarian raiding and abandonment. For Southwest Germany, these are a series of barbarian invasions from ca. 233-259/260 that culminated in the overrunning of the region by the Alemanni in 254 in *Raetia* and 259/260 in *Germania Superior*. For Transylvania, these are the claim that the region was the focus of barbarian invasion during the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab ca. 245-247, and the abandonment of the region between the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268) and the reign of Aurelian (270-275). Though alternatives have been given to some of these claims in the last four decades, they remain the predominant themes.

Re-evaluating these narratives may seem a modest aim, but the volume of data involved is considerable. The analysis that follows draws on data from 91 published sites (Appendix A), 34,688 single coin finds (Appendix B.1), 30 period coin hoards (Appendix B.3), and 38 period inscriptions (Appendix C) in Southwest Germany and 55 published sites (Appendix

D), 10,448 single coin finds (Appendix E.1), 28 period coin hoards (Appendix E.3), and 70 period inscriptions (Appendix F) in Transylvania.² It is only by thoroughly working through the material on a site by site basis it is possible to see which parts of the narrative are the result of circular argumentation and historical interpretation, and which are based on pure archaeological evidence.

The second aim is to see if there are any similarities in the trajectory of both regions in their final years of Roman rule. That Southwest Germany and Transylvania were both abandoned by Rome between the later 250s-270s has been noted in passing for the past century, usually in minor comparison. To date, the only studies to look at material from both regions are a short qualitative epigraphic note by Mrozewicz (1998) and attempts by Matei (2012; 2018) for the entirety of *Dacia* to build off the work of Scholz (2006) for Southwest Germany. However, neither study delves deep enough to sufficiently address the issues.

The third and final aim is to amass a base from which to further address the interpretation of the material in an analytic fashion, to bring the data to a level of usability closer to that employed in the debates on Roman Britain. Due to the quantity of data and the initial necessity to examine each site at a forensic level, extensive discussion of explanatory models beyond the received narratives is outside the scope of the current survey. It is hoped that further work beyond the thesis will employ this dataset to conduct theoretical analysis on regional and local themes.

In order to achieve the first aim, a database of sites was created by reading through the German and Romanian site reports from the study areas. The databases are used to look at each region individually, identifying key indicators of activity at different sites. After assessing the validity of the dating criteria, evidence for construction, demolition, destruction, hoarding, and continued occupation or reoccupation of sites is weighed to see if the evidence for activity is valid, and how it relates to the bigger themes and narratives in the region. In addition to the site records, the period numismatic assemblage and epigraphic assemblages are placed within context of the larger regional assemblages. This too is considered against the claims specialists have made for the character of transition in the two areas. The context of discovery and accuracy in recovery and identification of coin hoards is examined also to address their suitability as evidence for historical events.

² 109 total sites in Southwest Germany if extramural settlements are counted separately from forts. The background data for the study also includes the collation of 1302 total Roman inscriptions from Southwest Germany and 1805 from Transylvania, but these were not given individual database entries.

In order to achieve the second aim of identifying any similarities between regions, the data collected and processed in achieving the first aim is examined side by side to see if there are any similarities in the archaeological narrative of both regions. Widely varying levels in quality of excavation and recording between the regions makes comparison very difficult outside of military sites, but the collation of the numismatic and epigraphic assemblages do permit some level of comparison between both regions.

The third aim is by and large achieved through the execution of the first two. Ultimately, this aim seeks to establish a solid basis for further research.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis is divided into eleven chapters, which can be divided into four parts. Part One, Framing the Study, consists of Chapters One through Three. These chapters include the current chapter, which has addressed the general topic of the thesis, discussed the general problems with the archaeology of the third century and given a justification for the topic.

Chapter Two, Historiography, briefly looks at the evolution of discussion of the third century, followed by an overview and assessment of the evolution of the literary and archaeological narratives for both Southwest Germany and Transylvania. Discussion of the impact of the historical record on interpretation of the archaeology provides a framework for assessing current and previous narratives in parts two and three.

Chapter Three, Sources and Methods, sets out the parameters of the study by working through the scope and limitations of the source material as it pertains to the survey period in general, as well as regional limitations. This is accomplished through discussing the pitfalls of using material culture as dating evidence, specifically ceramics and coins, normally used as the primary dating criteria for archaeological features, and the problems this has on interpreting the archaeological record in both regions. Given the scope and limitations of the material, the methodology for working through site records, numismatic assemblages, coin hoards, and epigraphic assemblages is laid out.

Part Two, Southwest Germany, consists of Chapters Four through Six. Problems in the data in this section arise due to much of it being created and documented over half a century ago and in many cases, earlier still. Though older assemblages and excavations have begun to be reworked with modern research, the historical narratives still affect the interpretation and understanding of the regional archaeology.

Chapter Four, Military Sites in Southwest Germany, works through the evidence from military sites in the region. This is the most data-heavy chapter due to the large number of

excavated sites, resulting from the massive undertaking of the Reichs-Limeskommission at the turn of the last century to excavate and document as much of the *Germania Superior-Raetia limes* as possible. A total of 56 forts and eighteen extramural settlements are examined. Thereafter, forts and extramural settlements are examined separately to see if there are divergent patterns in the archaeology.

Chapter Five, *Civilian Sites in Southwest Germany*, examines the evidence from towns and rural sites in the region. There is a total of seventeen towns, consisting of twelve larger towns and five small towns, and eighteen rural sites. Though much of the excavation at both towns and rural sites has taken place in the modern period, only about a fifth of these sites have extensive datasets.

Chapter Six, *Numismatic and Epigraphic Data from Southwest Germany*, frames both classes of period data within the larger regional assemblages before looking at the specifics of the mid-third century in-depth. The period numismatic assemblage, 1086 coins, constitutes 17.46% of the overall regional total, while the period epigraphic assemblage, 38 inscriptions, is 11.24% of the total of datable inscriptions from the region. The 30 coin hoards are treated separately from single coin finds, with a discussion of the validity of their use as evidence for current narratives being the main focus.

Part Three, *Transylvania*, consists of Chapters Seven through Nine. The data in this section is limited not only by the difficulties in third century material, but also by widely divergent standards of excavation, recording and publication. This has meant that much of the interpretation of the period has relied on numismatic and epigraphic data, which then informs the understanding of the site record, in most cases creating circular argumentation.

Chapter Seven looks at the *Military Sites in Transylvania*, which consist of two legionary fortresses and 29 auxiliary forts. Investigation of extramural settlements in the region outside of examples that evolved into large towns beside their respective military installations is extremely limited. Therefore, what little data is known from extramural settlements is examined alongside that for the forts. Intensive research is limited to sites along the northern frontier of the region, which affects the overall interpretation.

Chapter Eight, *Civilian Sites in Transylvania*, examines the data from nine towns, including five large towns and four small towns, and fifteen rural sites. Though most of the towns have been extensively excavated and researched, interpretation of the evidence is hindered by a lack of coherent publication and analysis. The sole exception to this is the provincial capital,

Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. However, even with this site much of the data is divorced from its stratigraphic context.

Chapter Nine, Numismatic and Epigraphic Data from Transylvania, looks at the period numismatic and epigraphic data in their larger regional assemblages before looking at period trends. Much of the period narrative is focused on these datasets. One thousand sixty-six period coins make up 10.16% of the overall assemblage of single coin finds, while 70 period inscriptions make up 17.72% of the corpus of datable inscriptions from the region. The 28 coin hoards have been particularly important in the narrative, and thus the validity of their use as a evidence is assessed.

Part Four, Conclusions, consists of Chapters Ten and Eleven. Chapter Ten, 'Southwest Germany and Transylvania at the End of Roman Rule', gives the general conclusions for each region. The data is weighed against established narratives to see if any hold more weight than others based on the evidence. Following, comparative analysis is undertaken to find similarities. The differences in excavation and publication of the archaeological record between survey areas make comparative analyses difficult to achieve beyond a rudimentary level for sites. This is due to a lack of nuances in site data from Transylvania as compared to Southwest Germany. However, comparative analyses can be made with the numismatic and epigraphic assemblages, as these datasets are less dependent on stratigraphic context.

Chapter Eleven, Concluding Remarks, gives a general conclusion of the thesis, highlighting the results of each chapter. The potential impact of the study is then given based on the creation of the dataset and the findings of research. A section outlining further avenues of study elaborates a research agenda for advancing interpretation, then proposes ways forward for both regional and inter-regional analysis.

2. Historiography

2.1 Introduction

The mid-third century has been referred to as a ‘crisis’ for much of the previous century (Rostovtzeff 1957, 433; Alföldi 1967; Alföldy 1974, 89-90; 1989; Strobel 1993, 340-348; Lorient and Nony 1997; Carrié and Rouselle 1999, 89; Heckster et. al. 2007). Select studies have chosen to extend the period from the beginning of the Severan dynasty to the death of Constantine I (192-337).³ Nevertheless, the idea of a ‘Third Century Crisis’ is traditionally associated with the historically framed period between the assassination of Severus Alexander by his own troops at Mainz in 235 to the ascension of Diocletian in 285. This idea of crisis is led by a reliance on the literary record, which tells of numerous ‘injustices’ brought to bear upon the Roman state. Notably, large swathes of territory were ceded to the Gallic Empire in the West and the Palmyrene Empire in the East, barbarians raided deep into the Mediterranean heart of the Empire through Spain, Italy, Africa, and Greece, the currency was debased to a point of worthlessness, and no less than 51 claimants made an attempt for the throne in a period of 50 years (*tab. 2.1*; Drinkwater 2005, 28). Most importantly, the Empire enters this period under the guise of the Principate and exits it under the authoritarian aegis of the Dominate. Though the discussion has been led by the literary sources, much of it appeared to be backed by archaeological evidence. However, it is a re-examination of this very evidence in the past few decades which has led to a paradigm shift in the perception of the Crisis of the Third Century.

Since the early 1980s there has been a move to see the mid-third century as a period of change and transition rather than crisis, although our understanding of it still remains blurred.⁴ This is due to lacunae in contemporary literary sources and the cessation of large quantities of archaeologically diagnostic material outside of numismatic evidence (MacMullen 1976, 2).⁵ While the rise of archaeologically-minded studies have helped to set an agenda for further study, these have tended to focus solely on the western provinces of the Empire. Consequently, the similarities in perhaps what were the two biggest blows to the Roman

³ For studies placing the period of ‘crisis’ from Severus to Constantine see especially MacMullen (1976), Carrié and Rouselle (1999) and Bowman et. al. (2005).

⁴ For change rather than crisis see Reece (1981), Millett (1981), Strobel (1993), Witschel (1999; 2004), and Liebschuetz (2007). These studies are largely archaeologically-based and prefer to see transition rather than a severe cutoff.

⁵ Despite the disparate nature of the literary record for the third century, Badel and Béranger (1998) and Johnes et al. (2008) both manage to pull together an exhaustive collection of the evidence.

world at the time remain overlooked; the loss of the *Agri Decumates* in Southwest Germany and Roman *Dacia* (King and Henig 1981; Witschel 1999; 2004).⁶

Central Empire			Gallic Empire			
Emperor	Co-emperor	Reign	Emperor	Co-emperor	Reign	
Maximinus Thrax		235-238				
Gordian I		238				
Gordian II		238				
Balbinus and Pupienus		238				
Gordian III		238-244				
Philip the Arab		244-249				
	Philip II	244-249				
Trajan Decius		249-251				
	Herennius Etruscus	251				
Trebonianus Gallus		251-253				
	Hostilian	251				
	Volusian	251-253				
Aemelian		253				
Valerian		253-260				
	Gallienus	253-260				
Gallienus		260-268	Postumus		260-268	
	Saloninus	260				
			Marius		268	
Claudius II		268-270	Victorinus		268-271	
Quintillus		270				
Aurelian		270-275				
			Tetricus I		271-274	
Tacitus		275-276				
Florian		276				
Probus		276-282				
Carus		282-283				
	Carinus	283				
Carinus		283-285				
	Numerian	283-284				

Table 2. 1: List of Central Empire and Gallic Empire emperors (without usurpers) during the 'Crisis of the Third Century' from the death of Severus Alexander in 235 to the ascension of Diocletian in 285. Emperors central to the study are highlighted in grey.

This chapter examines the constituent parts of the historiographical narrative of Southwest Germany and Transylvania in the mid-third century. Each region's narrative is assessed separately, focusing on the literary and then the archaeological evidence. After examining the historiography, an account is taken of previous comparative study of both regions. Through this process several themes become apparent in both narratives; a lack in reliable, concrete literary sources yet a dependence on them to explain the archaeological narrative. Further,

⁶ While Witschel (1999) does indeed include sections on *Germania Superior* and *Raetia*, Roman *Dacia* is completely overlooked.

there is almost solitary reliance on coin finds to sustain the archaeological evidence. Finally, comparative study between the two regions has been superficial at best. This is especially notable with reference to the mid-third century.

2.2 Southwest Germany in the mid-third century

Although the survey period begins at 238, in order to fully understand the narrative, it is necessary to take a step back to look at the events of 233 under Severus Alexander. While there is only one line in the literary record to give this event credence, it has had a profound impact on the interpretation of the archaeological record. A supposed Alemannic raid into the *Agri Decumates* sets the stage for the remainder of the narrative during the mid-third century. The potential ramifications of this raid have been crucial to understanding developments in the mid-third century. Indeed, it is known by a number of epithets, including ‘*Das Schicksalsjahr*’ (Kellner 1995, 321) and ‘*Das Katastrophenjahr*’ (Reuter 2012, 307) among others.

2.2.1 Literary evidence for Southwest Germany in the mid-third century

It is hard to pin down any ancient literary sources that specifically address conditions in Southwest Germany during the Roman occupation (Hind 1984, 187; Lund 1985). In fact, the only source to directly mention the region by name in Antiquity, the *Agri Decumates*, is a short description given by Tacitus in the *Germania* (29, 3). The mid-third century is no exception, with a virtual gap in the historical narrative (Unruh 1993, 241-242). This is exacerbated by the fact that scholarship on the sources focuses not on what evidence is available for the end of Roman administration, but rather encounters with and occupation by Germanic tribes, specifically the Alemanni (Dirlmeier et. al. 1976-1984; Okamura 1984; Keller 1989).⁷ Nevertheless, inferences can be made concerning the literary evidence for Southwest Germany in the mid-third century. In total, there are six sources that refer to the area, five of which are in Latin, and one in Greek. All focus on Germanic invasion, at times specifically mentioning the Alemanni, though not always. These can be separated into three main categories:

- 1.) Sources that refer to events in surrounding regions that have been used to imply activity in Southwest Germany
- 2.) Sources that refer to the territory beyond the Rhine.
- 3.) Sources that refer to the province of *Raetia*, but not specifically to the *Agri Decumates* or Southwest Germany

⁷ The two main studies to address the literary evidence from the perspective of the end of Roman administration are both by Unruh (1992, 1993), however both are still centred on the concept of *Limesfall* via Germanic invasion.

Two fall into the first category, the first being the historian Herodian, whose histories cover the period from 180 to 238. Writing during the reign of Philip the Arab, Herodian is one of the few contemporary authors who survives, though the accuracy of his work has been called into question (Whittaker 1969, vii-viii). Recounting the events of 233, writing in Greek, Herodian states (author's translation):

Herodian (vi.7.2): Now unexpected messages and dispatches made their way to Alexander, from which he took great worry; the governors of Illyria reported that the Germans had crossed the Rhine and Danube, plundering the Roman Empire, and with a huge force were overrunning the military camps, as well as the towns and villages on these rivers. They also said that Illyricum, bordering on and neighbouring Italy, was in no small danger itself.

Next is the Chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea, a theologian in the court of Constantine I. Based on intervals of Olympiads, the Chronicle extends to the year 303. It survives via the later Chronicle of Jerome which extends to 378, as well as a tenth century Armenian translation (Croke 1982, 197; Unruh 1993, 242). Although previous scholars considered that Eusebius was working off of the earlier *Chronographiae* of Julius Africanus, it is now accepted that Eusebius' style is unique enough to deem his work original (Helm 1924, 9-13; Mosshammer 1979, 29-83). The chronicle states (author's translation):

For the year 262: While Gallienus gave way to licentiousness, the Germans came as far as Ravenna.

For the year 263: The Alemanni laid waste to the Gallic provinces, then Italy; the Goths penetrated into Greece, Macedonia, Pontus, and Asia Minor. The Quadi and Sarmati invaded Pannonia.

There is only one source in the second category, in Latin. The *Laterculus Veronensis* survives as a supposed list of Roman provinces that were extant during period of the Tetrarchy into the reign of Constantine I. Dating of the list has not been without controversy, with initial dating to the year 297. Recent scholarship has found that the list most likely dates to around the year 314 based on changes in the provincial structure in the early fourth century (Barnes 1982, 201-208; Zuckerman 2002, 617-637). The passage concerning Southwest Germany refers not to extant provinces, but to lost territory. It states (author's translation):

Laterculus Veronensis (xiv): The names of the territories beyond the Rhine which are: Usiporum, Tubantum, Victoriensium, Novariseari, Casuariorum. All of these territories beyond the Rhine are in the reduced form of *Belgica Prima*. Beyond Mainz, the Romans possessed 80 *leugae* on the other side of the Rhine. These territories were occupied by the barbarians under the emperor Gallienus.

There are four sources in the third category, all of which are Latin. Three of these are from histories, while the final source is a panegyric written in the court of Constantius. The first two of these, Eutropius' *Breviarium* and the *De Caesaribus* of Aurelius Victor date from the fourth century. They focus on the ascension of the emperors Valerian and Gallienus, which occurred due to a revolt in the armies of *Raetia* and *Noricum*. Eutropius wrote his *Breviarium* at the request of the emperor Valens in the year 369, allegedly to educate the military elite and court officials who were by that point of Danubian provincial and Germanic stock (Bird 1993, xviii-xix). Aurelius Victor appears to have been a contemporary of Eutropius, finishing his work sometime between 359-361, with an added postscript after the death of Constantius II (Bird 1994, xi). Although Aurelius Victor tends to use a style unique to that of Eutropius, common mistakes found in both these texts and those of the *Historia Augusta*, Festus' *Breviarum*, and Ammianus Marcellinus have led to the assumption of a previously-written history used by all five authors (Bird 1994, xv). These were first noted by the German scholar Enmann, giving rise to speculation of a so-called Enmannische Kaisergeschichte (Enmann 1884, 337-501).⁸ The final source is the *Panegyrici Latini* 8(V) 10.4. While these sources do in fact mention the province of *Raetia*, they may also mention events occurring in the vicinity of the region, as did the sources from the first category. They state as follows (author's translation):

Eutropius (ix.7-8): "Whence Licinius Valerian, was simultaneously declared imperator and Augustus by the army in Raetia and Noricum, which he was leading. Likewise, Gallienus was declared Caesar by the senate at Rome. The leadership of these emperors was dangerous, almost destructive to the Roman name, whether it be due to unfortunate circumstances or their cowardice. The Germans came as far as Ravenna"; "...after laying waste to the Gallic provinces, the Alamanni made incursions into Italy".

Aurelius Victor (*De Caes.* xxxii.1): "But the soldiers, who had been drawn together from all corners and stationed in Raetia due to the impending war, deferred imperium on Licinius Valerianus (Valerian), who, although being from a distinguished enough family, nevertheless was following a military career as was still custom at the time. The senate bestowed the title of Caesar on his son Gallienus";

(xxxiii.4): "The Parthians occupied Mesopotamia. Bandits, moreover, a woman, took control of the East. Likewise the Alamanni took hold of Italy and the Franks, having plundered Gaul, took hold of Spain and even laid waste to Tarraco, nearly razing it. In time, some of them came across boats and went as far as Africa."

(xxxiii.17): "And then Aureolus, while he was in command of the legions in Raetia, due to the laziness of the cowardly leader (Gallienus), took command of imperial power and pressed for Rome, as is custom."

⁸ Despite the statement by den Boer (1972, 21) that the Enmannische Kaisergeschichte was 'created in 1874' as well as hesitations noted by Dufraigne (1975, xxvii), it is generally accepted to have been a real work that is now lost to posterity (Barnes 1970; Bird 1973; Burgess 2005).

The third source in this category, Orosius' *Historiae adversus Paganos* completed sometime around 418, is considered to be an addendum to St. Augustine's *City of God* (Deferrari 1964 xviii-xx). Similarities in his writing can be seen with respect to the events stated in the Chronicle of Eusebius, possibly influenced by Orosius' tutelage under St. Jerome at Jerusalem in 415 (Deferrari 1964, xix; Unruh 1993, 244). Orosius states (author's translation):

Orosius (vii.22.1): "With all of Raetia and Italy having been penetrated via the Alps, the Germans reached as far as Ravenna. The Alamanni, raiding the Gallic provinces even went into Italy. Greece, Macedonia, Pontus, and Asia were wiped out by an inundation of the Goths".

The final source in this category is a panegyric given to Constantius on the occasion of his recovery of *Britannia* from the usurper Allectus. The panegyric was given by a member of Constantius' court at Autun shortly thereafter, presumably in 297 or 298. Although focusing on the accomplishments of this campaign, the panegyric gives a window into the events of the mid-third century, and chronologically is the closest literary source. Furthermore, it is the only one to specifically mention the loss of *Raetia* (Nixon and Saylor Rodgers 1994, 105-106). It states (author's translation):

Panegyrici Latini (8(V), 10.4): "The separation of these provinces from Roman light, however sad, was less dishonourable under the stewardship of Gallienus. For then, whether due to the neglect of affairs or to the inclination of everyone's fortune, the state had been truncated of nearly all of its limbs. For then, the Parthian raised himself too high and the Palmyrene thought himself equal. All of Syria and Egypt faded; Raetia was lost, Noricum and Pannonia laid waste. Italy herself, the mistress of nations lamented the destruction of many of her own cities. There was not enough anguish in singular losses, when the state lost almost everything".

What is clear after examining the literary sources is that while all but the panegyric deal with some sort of Germanic incursion, none of them mention the loss of any territory. While Herodian notes the presence of Germanic raiders across the Rhine and Danube in 233, the implication is that the threat was centred around *Illyricum*. Furthermore, the historical sources seem to be more concerned with ascension of Valerian and Gallienus, taking place in *Raetia* and *Noricum*, giving the inroads made by the Germans little more thought than what is implied in the Chronicle. Most striking, however, is the fact that the panegyric does not give mention as to why *Raetia* was lost, nor does it mention the loss of territory in *Germania Superior*. This, however, may be more to accentuate the severity of the loss of *Britannia* and its subsequent reconquest.

2.2.2 Archaeological evidence for Southwest Germany in the mid-third century

Though not without its own problems, the archaeological evidence from Southwest Germany offers other insights into life there in the mid-third century. However, this period is largely overlooked by general surveys of the region (Nuber 1990, 54). This is augmented by the fact that most overarching studies on Roman Germany for both lay and specialist audiences gloss over the period entirely.⁹ Furthermore, the conclusions reached have been largely influenced by the historical narrative, despite the lack of sources that specifically refer to Southwest Germany, either provincially or geographically.¹⁰

Heising (2015a) has recently argued that the basis of Roman Archaeology in Germany on the Humanist tradition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has had a large effect on the archaeological narrative. This has led to a reliance on interpreting the literary sources as fact, despite knowledge that they were written mainly for entertainment rather than veracity. This can be seen back as far as Hoffmann's (1823) tome on the end of Roman rule in the northwestern quadrant of Southwest Germany (Heeren 2016, 187). The result is a historical tradition of *Alamanneneinfall* and *Limesfall* where the defensive lines are overrun by the Alemanni, who then proceed to plunder and ransack the region with impunity (Okamura 1984, 155).

Consequently, destruction horizons at archaeological sites in the region have been attributed either to the first incursion in the year 233 or the second in 259/260 (Schönberger 1969, 175-177; 1985, 414-424; Baatz 1982, 215; Okamura 1984, 217; Bernhard 1990, 120; Reuter 2007, 81-86). A third destruction horizon solely in *Raetia* has previously been posited in the early 240s as well (Kellner 1953; 1960a). The evidence for all three of these squarely rests on the numismatic assemblage (Baatz 1986, Nuber 1990, 58; Kos 1995; Kortüm 1996; 1998, 45-48, 58-59; Sommer 2014). This is due to two factors. The first is the use of assemblages from 'dated sites' in the region in order to date other sites. While this may yield quick results with interpretation of finds, the chronology of the 'dated sites' used in the region is based on the attempt to link archaeological evidence to historical events believed to be recorded in the literary sources, leading to a feedback loop that reinforces previous interpretation (Schallmayer 1987a; Heising 2015a; Heeren 2016). Second is the historic employment of the

⁹ For examples of specific monograph-length works relevant to Southwest Germany see Hertlein et. al. (1928), Filtzinger et. al. (1986), Cüppers (1990), Cysz et. al. (1995), Rupp and Birley (2012), and Klee (2013). Notable exceptions of general studies are Steidl (2000a), Schallmayer (2004), and Meyer (2010). Mid-third century specific studies see Kuhnen (1992a) and Schallmayer (1995; 1996). The larger *obergermanisch-raetische Limes des Römerreichs* series as well as smaller academic works exist that expand on a more specialist level but tend to be more specific to sites or concepts.

¹⁰ e.g. *Germania Superior/Raetia* or 'the land beyond the Rhine'.

Planum method of excavation which continues to be used in many parts of Germany. This method focuses on wide, open area excavations with the benefit that often an entire site can be opened up and investigated. While this affords a neat, systematic excavation, the major drawback is that the entire site is taken down at predetermined intervals. The consequence is that much of the crucial stratigraphic information is lost within the excavated intervals, especially when dealing with demolition and destruction deposits (Barker 1993, 146-147).¹¹ The relative rarity of excavations which practice versions of single context recording presents problems for both the dating of finds and the analysis of sites.

Due to their relative independence from archaeological excavation, emphasis for interpretation has largely been based on monetary hoards despite their relatively low quantity (Blanchet 1900; Reinecke 1934; Koethe 1950; Roeren 1960, 214-220; Kuhnen 1992b, 39-41; Haupt 2001).¹² This leads to a situation of interpretation where hoards are many times completely divorced from their archaeological context, yet are used to reinforce the literary evidence (Okamura 1996a, 31-34; Reuter 2007, 129).¹³ Despite advances in interpretation of hoards in British contexts over the past four decades, there has been little discussion in Southwest Germany outside of the traditional narrative of fear and/or plunder being the main factor for deposition hoards.¹⁴

The numismatic evidence has the potential to be further bolstered by scientific dating, especially from dendrochronology. While this has been a commonplace practice for the past thirty years or so on many archaeological sites throughout Germany, much of the data is relegated to stand-alone sections in archaeological interims or completely unpublished altogether (Kortüm 1998, 61-63; Reuter 2012, 320-322).¹⁵ The end result is that their impact

¹¹ There is currently no nationally-accepted excavation methodology in Germany. Excavation methodology differs from state to state, depending on the research strategy of each state's monuments office. While some states have adopted single-context planning (e.g. Brandenburg), many have not. Consequently, although there is a universally used handbook for note taking (Kinne 2009) not unlike the MOLAS handbook (Museum of London 1994), there are only short articles that address chronology and excavation methodology (Schallmayer 1987a).

¹² Thirty monetary hoards are known of in Southwest Germany during the survey period, compared with hundreds of contemporary examples from neighbouring Gaul.

¹³ For example, of the hoards associated with a mid-third century destruction horizon in the region, three out of eleven were found as a result of archaeological intervention (Weißenburg (FMRD I 5100), Neiderbieber I and II (Ritterling 1901)). It is also worth noting that these hoards were found at the end of the nineteenth century. NB: The hoards from Neiderbieber do not have FMRD reference numbers due to the relevant volume still being in production.

¹⁴ For example, Reece (1988; 2015), Millett (1994), and Guest (2015) argue for a wider breadth of interpretation for the general phenomenon of hoarding, while Johns (1994), Fischer (1999), Künzl (2001), and Petrovsky (2006, 2009) argue for fear and plunder being motivators for deposition.

¹⁵ The list compiled by Kortüm (1998, 61-63) gives 91 published dates for Southwest Germany, four of which lie within the date range of the present survey. Fourteen years later, Reuter (2012, 221) posited that the number of total dates available had doubled.

on the narrative has been limited. Having examined the main factors that affect the archaeological narrative for Southwest Germany during the mid-third century, it is important to discuss the so-called ‘destruction horizons’ of 233, the early 240s, and 259-260 and their implications.

Claims that a 233 destruction horizon can be identified are explicitly inspired by the literary passage from Herodian (vi, 7, 2-3). Although the passage is neither geographically- nor tribally-specific in its reference, it has been taken to relate to Southwest Germany and the Alemanni (Unruh 1993, 243). Archaeologically, a chain of sites in the Wetterau region and along the Main *limes* does exist that appears to have contemporary burning layers or signs of fiery demolition present (Klee 2013, 68).¹⁶ It is enticing to tie these to an Alemannic raid, but the actual cause and geographic extent is still largely unclear (Reuter 2012, 214). This becomes obvious when evidence at sites beyond the region are used as justification for invasion and pillaging within it. To the southwest, layers of burning at the legionary fortress at Strasbourg were attributed to the Alemanni at around this time (Schönberger 1985, 415).¹⁷ Likewise, burning layers beyond the Danube as far east as Regensburg and as far south as *Cambodunum*/Kempten have been attributed to the Alemanni (Filtzinger 1986, 89). Importantly, however, large swathes of territory appear to remain untouched in between.

Upon further investigation, the numismatic evidence leads to similar conclusions. Out of the 30 coin hoards used to demonstrate Alemannic invasion, sixteen are situated outside of Southwest Germany. Nine of these hoards are located around the corridor of the Iller, Lech, and Isar, nearer to the capital and administrative centre of *Raetia*, Augsburg, than in the frontier region. In fact, the largest concentration of monetary hoards associated with these events is found in the vicinity of Kempten. Of the hoards present in Southwest Germany, not much can be said than they seem to mainly lie along the *limes* or major rivers, with exception of Baden-Baden and Unterdigisheim-Meißtetten.

The issue concerning the evidence of the Alemannic invasion of 233 can be distilled into a case of who did it and when (Schönberger 1985, 415). In fact, the usage of barbarian raiding

¹⁶ In the Wetterau, these destruction layers attributed to the Alemannic incursion have been identified in the forts at Butzbach, Echzell, Altenstadt, Lagenhain, Heldenbergen, and Walldürn, as well as in civil contexts at Friedberg-Bauernheim and Frankfurt am Main-Schwanheim (Reuter 2012, 309). Further east in *Raetia* in the forts at Dambach, Pfünz, Straubing, and the gate at Dalkingen near Rainau-Buch (Batz 1982, 215; Schönberger 1985, 414-418; Filtzinger 1986, 89; Planck and Bender 2014). Moreover, the bath complex associated with the fort at Weißenburg appears to go out of use based on monetary evidence.

¹⁷ It is important to note, however, that the dating evidence used was a single Antoninianus of Maximinus Thrax dated to 236, the minting of which alone would have post-dated 233 by three years. Nonetheless the implication of this find is sustained Alemannic raiding spurring on from the events of 233.

as a culprit for evidence of destruction is a recurring theme in the narrative of the third century not just in Southwest Germany, but in Roman Germany as a whole.¹⁸ The geographically-disparate nature of the evidence points to a series of events that led to a cluster of sites with coinage not post-dating 233 incurring burning in the Wetterau region of Southwest Germany and another, possibly related series of events that led to concentrated hoarding in the river corridors between Augsburg and Kempten. However, there is still no physical proof of Germanic, let alone Alemannic perpetrators. Nevertheless, the evidence of skeletal remains with traumatic injuries at multiple sites implies that the severity of these events should not be underestimated.¹⁹

The effects of the events of 233 are considered to have had a permanently negative effect on the region, signalling an economic downturn from which it never recovered (Knierriem 1995, 39; Steidl 2000b, 76; Heising 2014, 338). Indeed, a gradual drop in coin circulation in the region can be seen beginning with the reign of Maximinus Thrax in both *Germania Superior* and *Raetia* (Batz 1982, 89; Kortüm 1998, 50, Abb. 107-109). Archaeologically, this is potentially seen in the modification of military sites along the frontier. This occurs both in the reduction of ancillary buildings such as bath houses, and of fortlets (Scholz 2002; Jae and Scholz 2000; Reuter 2012, 312-313).²⁰ However, there is also evidence to support the contrary. Investment in the region seems to have taken place on a fairly wide scale in *Germania Superior* during the mid-third century (Drinkwater 1987, 110). The evidence for infrastructure comes in the form of thirteen milestones dating from the period. Epigraphic evidence also points to repair works on the bath house at the fort at Jagsthausen sometime between 244 and 249 (CIL XIII 6562).

Civic and religious life also seems to have been maintained. Excavations at Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Dieburg, Ladenburg, Bad Wimpfen, Rottenburg, and Faimingen have found that in each case the city walls were erected sometime either shortly before or during this period (Knierriem 1995, 39; Reuter 2012, 314-315). With this is renovation of a Jupiter Column in 240 by C. Sedatius Stephanus at Frankfurt-Heddernheim (CIL XIII 7352) and the erection of a second example *de novo* at Wiesbaden by a Victorinus in 239 (CIL XIII 7353).

¹⁸ See Heimerl et al. (2016) and Heising (2016b) for critiques of the late third century Frankish raids in the Rhineland. Okamura (1984, 155) poignantly summarized the issue with the statement that ‘Future historians will have to avoid making unqualified statements of this sort: “That Germans invaded along the Roman road from X to Y... is shown by Blanchet’s hoard’s nos. 1,2, and 3”’.

¹⁹ Three skeletons were found in the well from Frankfurt-Heddernheim, which had a dendrochronological date of 210 or sometime after (Hampel 2001). Additionally, the discovery of a skeleton on the Southeast tower of the fort at Pfünz, led to the conclusion of some form of violent destruction (Kellner 1995, 323).

²⁰For reduction of bath houses see Scholz (2018). For the reduction/abandonment of fortlets see Reuter (1996) and Jae and Scholz (2000). The exceptions being Neuwirtshaus, Rötelsee bei Welzheim, and Mainhardt.

Evidence for votive altars also continues until the year 250.²¹ *Raetia*, however, would seem to have followed a different trajectory.

The discovery of a hoard near the fort at Gunzenhausen in 1953 containing 251 coins ranging in date from Commodus to Gordian III led to postulations that the Raetian *limes* were overrun by barbarians between the years 241-245.²² It also led to the re-examination of a contemporary coin hoard from Kösching.²³ The further discovery in 1962 of a hoard containing 82kg of iron objects at the fort at Künzing, south of the Danube was seen as a confirmation of a barbarian incursion (Hermann 1969). The Künzing find was given a mid-third century date due to the presence “very close by” of a freshly-minted as of Gordian III (Kellner 1995, 330).²⁴ Evidence further east near Regensburg seemed to imply similar conclusions. Perhaps the most compelling is the destruction in fire of the fortlet and the extramural settlement at Regensburg-Großprüfening. The fortlet had a coin sequence that ended with a coin of Gordian III in 242-243 (Kellner 1995, 329).²⁵ Additionally, the evidence from two wells at the rural settlement near Regensburg-Harting has been used to imply Germanic cult practice that was the culmination of raiding and pillaging of the site. Within the two wells were the remains of fourteen individuals, which displayed evidence of scalping and cannibalization (Alt 1992; Schweissing 2009). Although the different pieces to this argument may at first seem compelling, it should be noted that it is in the nuances that the contention lies. The only evidence from within the region of Southwest Germany are the two hoards from Kösching and Gunzenhausen. Meanwhile, as in the case of 233, evidence from south and east of the region is used to bolster and further imply the devastation. Moreover, the important point is that while the metal hoard from Künzing did display evidence of exposure to fire it is not stratigraphically linked to any destruction. Nor is there any stratigraphic relationship between the as of Gordian III and the hoard. Neither is there

²¹ CIL XIII 6566, Osterburken (244-249); CIL XIII 7754, Niederbieber (246); CIL XIII 6552, Jagsthausen (248); CIL XIII 6658, Seligenstadt (249); CIL XIII 7440, Kapersburg (250).

²² Kellner (1953) would originally give the date of 241-242 as did Baatz (1982, 78), however Kellner (1995, 329) would later revise his date to 244. Fischer (1988, 20) gives the date as 245, but these are all based on the evidence described below.

²³ The coin hoard evidence from the *Germania Superior* side of Southwest Germany is considerably richer than that from *Raetia*. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this conclusion was reached in spite of the fact that a hoard from Weißenburg with a closing date under Trebonius Gallus was known at the time. Furthermore, the known coin sequence at many of the forts continued after Gordian III, albeit with very few examples (Kellner 1953, 174-175).

²⁴ The general importance of the find is seen in the statement that it is an ‘...Einblick in die Waffenkammer einer Kohorte in der ersten Hälfte des 3. Jahrhunderts...’ (Kellner 1995, 329).

²⁵ For the full report on Großprüfening see Narr (2015).

stratigraphic evidence for the hoards from Kösching or Gunzenhausen (Okamura 1984, 217).²⁶

The initial basis for a 259-260 end for Roman occupation in Southwest Germany rests almost entirely on the *numerus* fort of Niederbieber at the extreme western edge of the region. More specifically, it rests on the presence of two coin hoards, which in turn were used to date the end of the site. Both were found during excavation. Niederbieber I contained 193 Antoniani ranging from Caracalla to Gallienus with a closing date of 258. Niederbieber II contained 88 denarii from Clodius Albinus to Gordian III and 301 Antoniniani from Macrinus to Gallienus with a closing date of 259. The conclusions reached at the time of their discovery at the turn of the twentieth century were that this was the latest evidence of occupation in the frontier zone of Southwest Germany, with the *Limesfall* occurring sometime between 258 and 260 (Ritterling 1901; Reuter 2007, 81). In addition to traces of burning found at the site, an image that has become iconic with the *Limesfall* was discovered. A skeleton, most likely the remains of the unit's *imaginifer* was discovered in the *aedes* of the fort's principia, next to a set of keys and a silver portrait of an emperor (Bernhard 1990, 120-121). Although traditionally attributed to the Alemanni overrunning the fort and smashing and pillaging everything in their wake, Lawrence Okamura (1984, 260-261) posited whether or not the destruction may have been the work of usurpers rather than Germanic raiders. Okamura correlated the scene with the cessation of the Gallic Empire under Postumus, occurring in 260 and thus being contemporary with the end of Niederbieber.²⁷

Outside of Niederbieber, there is little evidence for violence and destruction in the *Germania Superior* sector of the region. However, in *Raetia*, the evidence points to every fort along the frontier ending in some sort of fiery destruction with the exceptions of Schirenhof, Halheim, and Burgsalach. Furthermore, a break in the numismatic sequence at the forts along the Raetian frontier in 253-254 has led some modern commentators to assert that the eastern half of the region was abandoned in the year 254 (Reuter 2007, 134-137; 2012, 316-317). There was a tendency to stick to the historical claim dating back to Hoffmann (1823) that Roman administration had withdrawn from the frontier zone by the year 260 (Schönburger 1985, 424;

²⁶ Despite the implications of Okamura's assertions in 1984, Kellner (1995, 329-330) held onto the assumptions of the relevance to this material to his 244 date. Further, the correlation of Regensburg-Harting to 244 rests solely on Kellner's implications, while Kuhnen (1992b, 45) continues to tie it to the abandonment of Southwest Germany but does not assert a date.

²⁷ Okamura's (1984, 261) interpretation is just as superfluous as others, as he narrates the scene in the *aedes* as an oath-swearing to Postumus gone wrong, whereby the image of the emperor is smashed and the *imaginifer* executed for his unwillingness to swear allegiance to the new usurper. The important contribution of Okamura, however, is the consideration that there is in fact no evidence of Germanic, let alone Alemannic activity at the fort.

Reuter 2007, 85-86; 2012, 318-320). However, recent research has tried to focus on a holistic view, while stressing different aspects from economic decline (Kuhnen 1992a; 1997), earthquakes (Sommer 2007) and environmental crises (Haas 2006), to troop displacement (Strobel 1999). However, there is agreement that whatever the end result, it would have created a 'no-man's land' between the breakaway Gallic Empire east of the Rhine and the Roman Empire south of the Danube (Okamura 1984, 274; Drinkwater 1987, 226).

The final piece of evidence to support this claim came with an unexpected find during construction work at *Augusta Vendelicum*-Augsburg, the provincial capital of *Raetia*, in 1992 (Bakker 1993). The so-called Augsburg Victory Altar was dedicated by one Marcus Simplicinius Genialis in thanks to the army of *Raetia* for the rescue of 'thousands of Italians' that had been taken captive by invading Semnoni and Iuthungi. Importantly, the altar was dated to 260 based on the consulships of Postumus Augustus and Honoratius (whose names were chiselled out in *damnatio memoriae*), thus providing evidence that at least for a short while, the Gallic Empire was able to exert some influence over the provincial capital of *Raetia*.²⁸ The find was indeed important enough to spawn two colloquia addressing the issue, lending credence to Okamura's earlier claims (Schallmayer 1995; 1996).

Thus, despite the paucity of the literary record, ancient written sources have driven a narrative of repeated barbarian incursions beginning in 233 and culminated in the destruction of Niederbieber around 259-260. Additional waves of destruction have been envisioned in *Raetia* during the 240s and 250s due to the reliance almost entirely on the numismatic assemblage of the region. This has led to an interpretation for both the fate of the *limes* and the civil settlements in its hinterland being based almost solely on the evidence from forts. Ideally, integration of scientific dating would provide more information, but much of this has been overlooked. While the epigraphic record and the phenomenon of mural construction in towns in the region point to some semblance of life as usual in the region, the drop in coin circulation would imply that the administration then found supplying the region with coin difficult. Ultimately, the evidence from Augsburg points to the loss of territory to the Gallic Empire, if at least for a short period, which resulted in the cessation of central Roman administration in Southwest Germany.

2.3 Transylvania in the mid-third century

Moving onto Transylvania, similar themes run through the narrative. Most importantly, the literary record again provides little information as to the end of the province, leading to a

²⁸ For discussion over the political events concerning the Augsburg Victory Altar see Jehne (1996), König (1997), and Drinkwater (2007, 54-56).

reliance on the archaeological material. In contrast to Southwest Germany, the numismatic record is almost exclusively used as both dating criteria and evidence for occupation, with some reinforcement by epigraphic data. The outcomes of the narrative however, have been largely affected by a long and complicated political history that has influenced the course of Transylvania since the late eighteenth century.

2.3.1 Literary evidence for Transylvania in the mid-third century

The literary evidence for Transylvania is slightly better than that of Southwest Germany. Although there are more sources that directly mention the region, none of them give any detail as to why it was lost (MacKenzie 1986, 57). However, they do allow some further discussion. In total, nine sources remain from antiquity on the abandonment of Roman Dacia; six in Latin and three in Greek. Three of these Latin sources are in fact the same for Southwest Germany. These are Eutropius' *Breviarium*, the *De Caesaribus* of Aurelius Victor, and Orosius' *Historiae adversus Paganos*. Furthermore, they are in fact the same passages that mention the Germanic inroads into Gaul and Italy. Contemporary to these are the *Breviarium* of Rufus Festus and the *Vita Aureliani* of the *Historia Augusta*. The *Breviarium* of Festus was commissioned by Valens shortly after the completion of the works of Eutropius, and completed in sometime around 379 (Bird 1993, xix). On the other hand, the *Historia Augusta* is a controversial piece of work, supposedly written by six authors between the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine and covering the period from 117 to 284. While there has been much controversy surrounding the dating, authorship, and validity of the *Historia Augusta*, it is generally thought now to be the work of a single author, at the end of the fourth century, sometime between 395 and 400 (Syme 1971a, 76-86).²⁹ These sources state the following (author's translation):

Eutropius (ix.8): "...Dacia, which under Trajan had been laid out on the other side of the Danube was lost";

(ix.15): "...The province Dacia which Trajan had made beyond the Danube, with all of Ilyricum laid waste and Moesia was lost, desperate to be able to retain it (Dacia), he (Aurelian) took the Romans out of the cities and fields of Dacia and placed them in the middle of Moesia".

Aurelius Victor (*De Caes.* iii.3.3) "...and the land across the Danube which Trajan conquered was lost".

Festus (viii.2) "Trajan conquered the Dacians under the king Decebalus and made the province Dacia across the Danube in barbarian land, which had a thousand mile border; but under the emperor Gallienus it was lost, whence the Romans were transferred and in the regions of Moesia and Dardania the two Dacias were made by Aurelian".

²⁹ This is not without contention, most notably in the sustained debate between Syme (1968; 1971a; 1971b; 1983) for a late fourth century single author and Momigliano (1954; 1969; 1973) against it.

Historia Augusta (Aurelianus xxxix.7) “When he (Aurelian) had seen that Illyricum had been devastated and even Moesia had been lost, despairing to be able to retain it and removing the army and the provincials, he abandoned the province Dacia on the other side of the Danube founded by Trajan; he moved the people out of Dacia into Moesia and called it Dacia, which now divides the two Moesias”.

Orosius (vii.22.2): “... for Dacia on the other side of the Danube was lost forever”;

(vii.23.4): “(Aurelian) undertook an expedition across the Danube, defeated the Goths in great battles, and restored Roman dominion to its ancient boundaries”.

In addition, the final Latin source, Jordanes’ *Romana*, was written in the sixth century. The *Getica*, a history of the Goths, has been the focus of the majority of scholarly output considering Jordanes, leaving the *Romana* largely overlooked. (O’Donnell 1982, 223).³⁰ While it is known that the *Romana* was begun before the *Getica*, it was not finished until after, either sometime in 551 or 552. Although it is still contested what works Jordanes was working from in writing the *Romana*, it is believed to include those of Eusebius, Jerome, Florus, and Marcellinus *comes* (O’Donnell 1982, 224-226). The *Romana* states (author’s translation):

Jordanes (*Romana* 217-218): “Moreover, Trajan, after defeating their king Decebalus, reduced the lands of the Dacians beyond the Danube into a province which covers a million *spatia*. But while Gallienus reigned he lost these lands and the emperor Aurelian, having called up the legions moved them into Moesia, and there formed on one side *Dacia Mediterranea* and on the other *Dacia Ripensis* which connects Dardania”.

Sadly, the Greek sources do not give much more information, and date long after the events they purport to describe. Of these, John Malalas dates earliest to the sixth century, but is the most fragmentary. Following this, George Synkellos wrote at the beginning of the ninth century. The final source, the Byzantine encyclopedia known as the *Suda* was compiled in the tenth century. The Greek sources state the following (author’s translation):

John Malalas (12.301) “...And the same Aurelian that made the province *Dacia Peripotamos (Ripensis)*, mostly being on the river Danube...”.

George Synkellos (470.14) “He (Aurelian) left the Dacia of Trajan to the barbarians and placed the men and women into the middle of Moesia, and named it *Dacia Mediterranea*”.

Suda (s.v.) “The land of Dacia – Trajan founded the province in the lands on the other side of the Danube and Aurelian abandoned it. As the lands of Illyria and Moesia had been laid waste, and having decided that he was powerless to save the province, he saved the frontier in the middle of the river (Danube). Thus, having led the Roman colonists both out of the fields

³⁰ The *Getica*, a history of the Goths, was largely based on the previous work of the historian Cassiodorus. For the relationship of the *Getica* and Cassiodorus see O’Donnell (1979) and Croke (1987).

and the cities, he placed them in the middle of Moesia, and named the land Dacia, and now it lies in the middle of the two Moesias, separating them from one another.

Three running themes become apparent in the historical sources. The first of these is the process of abandonment beginning with Gallienus and ending with Aurelian (Marin 1943, 172). Additional evidence for abandonment under Gallienus has been given in the apparent lack of the eastern half of *Dacia* in addition to Southwest Germany on the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (Macrea and Tudor 1960, 465; Protase 2000, 158).³¹ More recent literary analysis has reached similar conclusions, accepting that the evidence points to a process that begins with Gallienus and ends with Aurelian (Ruscu 2000, 275).

The second theme in the narrative, the transfer of population south of the Danube has perhaps been the most contentious point in Transylvanian historiography. Thus, it is important to note what is said in the sources. Only Jordanes mentions the sole transfer of the legions, while Eutropius, Festus, the *Historia Augusta*, George Synkellos, and the *Suda* all state that the entire population was removed. The remaining sources make no mention of any kind of transfer of people. It is also important to briefly restate that of the Latin sources, Jordanes was writing two centuries after the other sources that mention resettlement. Thus, during the Ceaușescu era, these earlier sources were claimed to be influenced by the propaganda of the Roman state that wanted to paint itself in a better light. The “correct” version, as related by Jordanes, must have been obtained by oral information (Iliescu 1971, 429-430). In less politically-charged times, textual analysis rather than state legitimacy has reached a similar conclusion, albeit by different means.

It is necessary to revisit the idea of the Enmannische Kaisergeschichte and its use as a common source for Eutropius, Festus, Aurelius Victor, and the *Historia Augusta*. Recent arguments have thus stated that it is the use of the Kaisergeschichte that accounts for the difference between the earlier Latin authors and Jordanes (Cizek 1986; Ruscu 2003, 184). Although Jordanes has been favoured for political reasons, outside of the legions, there is still no evidence for the relocation of the civilian population to the south of the Danube (MacKenzie 1986, 58; Diaconescu 2004, 130).

³¹ Reevaluation of the *Tabula Peutingeriana* by Talbert (2012, 134-136) gives the map a Diocletianic date based on numerous factors. Talbert surmises that although Dacia had been given up by the time that the map was produced, the inclusion of its road networks were due to not only demonstrating how far Roman control had once stretched, but also a reinforcement of imperial commitment to the eventual recovery of the region for Rome.

The third and final theme of the narrative is the reconquest of *Dacia* by Aurelian as noted by Orosius. While this is cited in numerous syntheses on *Dacia* (Daicoviciu 1979; Petolescu 1984, 189-191; Benea 1996, 32; Bărbulescu 1998, 81), the tract from Orosius remains the sole piece of evidence. Recently, this has been argued that it is due to a miscopying of Eutropius (ix.13.1-2) by Orosius, which states (author's translation):

“...he also strenuously conquered the Goths; with the various luck of wars he restored the Roman dominion to its original boundaries; in Gaul he overcame Tetricus among the Catakauni... and defeated Zenobia not far from Antioch, who held the East by her fallen husband Odenathus, without serious engagement...”

Thus, it has been argued that Orosius had mixed up the two passages from Eutropius (ix.13.1-2; ix.15) and combined them into a single event. This led to identification of the ‘restoration of Roman dominion’ with a reconquest of *Dacia*, for which there are no other extant sources. Thus, we can assume based on the lack of any other evidence, that the Aurelianic reconquest did not take place. This is in contrast to the defeat of the Gallic and Palmyrene Empires, both well-documented events (Ruscu 1998, 253).

2.3.2 Archaeological evidence for Transylvania in the mid-third century

Moving on from the literary evidence, it is important to first briefly address the issue of ethnic continuity in Transylvanian archaeology. Ultimately it has had an irrefutable impact on both the investigation and interpretation of the archaeological record which has arguably endured to the present day. There are three main issues in the ethnic continuity narrative – the survival of the ‘autochthonous’ Dacian population after the two Trajanic wars and subsequent conquest of the region in AD 106, the survival of a ‘Daco-Roman’ population after the abandonment of the region in the late third century, and the continuity of said culture until the arrival of the Slavs in the early seventh century (e.g. Constantinescu et al. 1975; Horedt 1982; Protase 1966; 1980; 2000). At the centre of these claims is the issue of sovereignty in Transylvania between the majority Romanian population and the historically aristocratic Hungarian minority (Ardevan and Zerbin 2007, 205).

Hungarian and Saxon sovereignty was justified by the position that the region was largely depopulated until it was colonized by the Hungarians in the ninth century. Furthermore, popular belief was that Romanians did not enter the region until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, crossing the Carpathians from Moldova and Wallachia (MacKenzie 1986, 139; Ellis 1998; Madgearu 2001). After centuries of strained cohabitation of Transylvania, relations between the various ethnic groups came to a head in the late eighteenth century with the

publication of the first academic study on the issue (Stoicescu 1983, 9). Austrian historian Franz Joseph Sulzer's (1783) *Geschichte des transalpinischen Daciens* based its conclusion of a non-Transylvanian origin for Romanians on four pillars – the Slavic influence on the Romanian language, the lack of political rights of Romanians in Transylvania, the Romanian adherence to Orthodox Christianity, and the claim in the literary sources that the provinces of Dacia were abandoned by Aurelian (Bârzu and Brezeanu 1991, 16; Ellis 1998, 223).

A century after Sulzer, the issue of Transylvanian sovereignty once again came to the academic forefront. This time it was via Hapsburg geographer Robert Rösler (1871), who argued for a non-Transylvanian origin for the Romanians. Romanian academic A.D. Xenopol (1884; 1885) responded with two treatises bestowing a Daco-Roman origin on Romanians based on linguistic and cultural evidence. Although probably the most impassioned advocate, Xenopol was neither the first nor the last. While limited to arguments based on linguistics, epigraphy, and isolated finds throughout Transylvania, the supposed presence (and implied continuity via the Romanian population) of early Christianity became a popular subject for academic debate around the time of Rösler's work (Scriban 1871; Enăceanu 1875; Pârvan 1911). The strongest Romanian advocates, however, came from an unlikely place. Initially devised by the Hapsburgs in the early eighteenth century, the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church combined Orthodox and Roman Catholic rites with the hope of enfranchising Romanians into the imperial framework. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, this was having the opposite effect (Boia 2000, 62). Romanian clergy in the Church who were sent to Rome for education came back with a new-found appreciation to assert their Classical heritage. Ironically, this so-called *Școală Ardeleană* (Transylvanian School) became the strongest advocate for Romanian primacy in the region (White 2000, 124-125).

The debate cooled significantly after the acquisition of Transylvania by the Kingdom of Romania with the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Unfortunately, this would not last. From 1947 until the end of the Gheorghiu-Dej³² era, emphasis was put on research that highlighted communist theories of class struggle and rejected 'Western imperialism' (Oltean 2007, 5). This had the ultimate effect that no work was conducted on Roman sites in the region for the following quarter century. The nation's Greco-Roman heritage was seen more as a representation of the West than modern Romania (Diaconescu 2004, 87). This influence is seen in the scholarship of the period, with the two major works from this time referring to the

³² The period (1947-1965) when Romania was under the stewardship of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, put in power by the Soviets. Although Gheorghiu-Dej was initially open to Soviet influence, the end of his rule saw trade open with the west and the dropping of Russian from school curricula.

Roman period as ‘*epoca sclavagismului*’ (slavery) (Macrea and Tudor 1960; Daicoviciu 1963). Following the transition in leadership to Nicolae Ceaușescu 1965, a ‘cultural revolution’ began which culminated in 1976. Ceaușescu issued a challenge to the Cultural Congress of Romania to “correct the grave mistakes of the previous Stalinist regime by creating a new theoretical history”. This new framework would centre on the continuity of the autochthonous Dacians throughout all periods in antiquity (Maier 1977, 4).

Attempting to draw linear connections from ancient Dacians to modern Romanians, the following decade saw an overwhelming focus on the Dacian element in archaeology (Haynes and Hanson 2004, 29). This led to an emphasis on post-Roman sites in Transylvania with cremation cemeteries. These sites supposedly stressed Dacian continuity via evidence of cremation burials. Most noteworthy are those at Bratei, Locusteni, Obreja, and Sopor de Câmpie (Condurachi 1964, 79; Protase 1971, 137-138; Bârză 1980, 63-64; Horedt 1982, 97-104; Stoicescu 1983, 197-199). Post-Roman Germanic settlement in Transylvania was also argued to be evidence of Dacian continuity.³³ In further juxtaposition of the evidence of cremation burials, any potential evidence of an early Christian community was used to imply continuity into the post-Roman period. The results ranged from linguistic studies focusing on liturgical terminology to archaeological treatises.³⁴

While there has been a shift towards emulating a ‘Daco-Roman’ provincial culture in the region, the scars of the continuity argument are still visible. Not unlike the situation in Southwest Germany, while there have been multiple works on the post-Roman period in Transylvania, there has been relatively little research carried out on the last decades of its Roman existence.³⁵ Most of the final Roman phases of sites have been deemed difficult to date outside of the epigraphic record (Stanciu 2011, 66). In addition to this, four general factors affecting Roman archaeology in Romania can be identified. First, and perhaps most detrimentally, is that the main focus of research in Roman Dacia has been on the early Roman

³³ This was argued via the Sântana de Mureș-Černjakov Culture by Condurachi (1964, 81) and Bârză (1973, 95-97). The Latin inscription OMAHAR V[IR] G[LORISVS] on the late fifth-century Gepidic tomb of Omahar at Apahida was also argued by Bârză (1980, 61) as evidence for continuity of the use of Latin in the region. However Harhoiu (1975, 105) and Opreanu (1995) see this as investiture of Germanic tribes *in barbarico* by the late Roman/early Byzantine state. From the benefit of hindsight, the idea of Germanic sites being the evidence for Dacian continuity seems outlandish. The justification stemmed from the belief that while the material culture of ‘the people of the land (i.e. Dacians)’ was archaeologically invisible in opposition to the high-status finds of their migrating overlords (Daicoviciu 1940, 63-65; Brezeanu 1984, 12).

³⁴ For linguistic study see Ștefanescu-Drăgănești (1986). For archaeological study see Gudea and Ghiurco (1988) and Gudea (2011). For a post-revolution interpretation see Zugravu (1997).

³⁵ Although numerous monographs on the post-Roman period have been published (the more credible being Horedt (1982) and Stanciu (2011)), but see also Protase (1966, 2000 for a collection of essays on the subject)), Hügel (2003) remains to this day the only monograph dedicated to the period of the mid-third century.

phases of urban settlement and military sites. This has led to most rural sites and smaller settlements in the region being relegated to the reference pages of gazetteers. Many times this occurs without much further comment besides a short discussion and an attempt to place the site in its geographical context.³⁶ This in turn is embellished by the fact that an estimated ninety percent of Roman period sites in Transylvania are known solely via their artefact assemblages (Oltean 2007, 8). Compounding these issues is that in general, archaeological sciences in Romania are largely unused, meaning that absolute dating from techniques like thermoluminescence, C-14 dating, or dendrochronology has yet to be employed in the Roman period. Finally, due to the issue of finds work and ceramic studies being in the beginning stages for Roman *Dacia*, there is a heavy reliance on numismatic data to date the phasing of sites, which tends to all but evaporate at most locations in the mid-third century (De Sena 2010, 964; Wanner and De Sena 2010, 8-9).³⁷ The culmination of all of these factors has led to a major lacuna in the knowledge of settlement patterns and stratigraphy outside of major urban sites. Despite this, some inferences into the final decades of the region can be made.

Scholars have noted evidence that suggests Roman *Dacia* appears to have been relatively peaceful in the mid-third century up to the reign of Gordian III, when the so-called Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab has been suggested to have some correlation in the archaeological record. Evidence points to the Carpi attacking the *limes Transalutanus* south of the Carpathians. These were the border defence works beyond the Olt River in eastern Oltenia. Hoards from destruction levels at the forts at Săpata de Jos, *Pons Aluti* (Ionești Govorii), and Bumbești-Jiu on the *limes Transalutanus* seem to signify that the defensive line was abandoned at about this time (Tudor 1978, 89; Ardevan and Zerbini 2007, 194; Găzdac 2012, 175). In general, there is an absence of numismatic data after the reign of Trajan Decius (Bogdan-Cătănicu 1981, 53; Găzdac 2002b, 74). However, this may also be related to the supposed Gothic incursion under Trajan Decius, who took the title *restitutor Daciarum* in 251 (CIL III 1176). In fact, *Romula*, situated south of the Carpathians and west of the Olt received a new circuit wall *manu militari* as late as 248 (Bogdan-Cătănicu 1981, 53; Wolfram 1988, 45; Ardevan and Zerbini 2007, 195). Furthermore, a contemporary

³⁶ While this tradition in Transylvania was started in the mid nineteenth century under the aegis of the Hapsburgs, it has continued up until the present day. See Ackner (1857), Goos (1876), Téglás (2004), and Marțian (1920) for early examples, while the most exhaustive is still Tudor (1968). For specific gazetteers on rural settlement, see Popa (2002) for Transylvania and Gudea (2008a) for the entirety of Roman Dacia. These studies are furthered by non period-specific county reports, the relative ones to this thesis being Crișan et. al. (1992), Moga and Ciugudean (1995), Lăzăr (1995), Costea (1995; 1996), Cavruc (1998; 2000), Luca et. al. (2003), and Luca (2005; 2010). For problems with land reform and figuring exact location of sites in Gazetteers, see Oltean (2007, 9).

³⁷ For a critical assessment of the state of finds work in Romania see Gudea (2009).

inscription from *Apulum* gives thanks to Jupiter Optimus Maximus from one C. Valerius Serapius for being a *Carpis liberatus* (CIL III 1054=IDR III/5, 171). Recent work has also inferred that the final phases of most fortifications in Roman Dacia incurred some modification or repair, however most of this is based on the evidence of single coin finds and comes from non-stratified excavation (Hügel 2003, 130-151; Isac 2008).

At first glance, the inscription from *Apulum* and the repairs to fortifications would seem to imply that there was conflict in Transylvania (Macrea 1969, 441; Gudea and Pop 1971, 65; Bărbulescu 1987, 29-30; Matei and Bajusz 1997, 46; Găzdac 2010, 141; Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 71). In fact, there is no evidence to support any incursion, except for the distribution of eighteen hoards that follow the path of the main road from *Drobeta* to *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (Găzdac 2002b, 75).³⁸ Whatever the case, it appears that between the efforts of Philip and Decius Roman *Dacia* was able to return to some form of stability, albeit minus the *limes Transalutanus* (Opreanu 1998a, 89). As late as 252, the *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis* at Partoș received the epithet *Chrysopolis*, implying some sort of stability to the region (IDR III/5, 432; AE 1989, 628; Aldea and Popa 1972, 212).

While there is room for argument that the events of the late 240s-early 250s did have an impact, Roman *Dacia* seems to have continued its existence for some time afterwards. The epigraphic record continues into the reign of Gallienus. All of these inscriptions, however, come from the capital of the *Tres Daciae*, *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*. In addition to an inscription honouring the sons of Gallienus (CIL III 7971), there is a dedicatory inscription from the construction of a temple to *Deus Azizuo* from between the years 256-258 (CIL III 1176). The final inscription to refer to the governing body of Roman *Dacia*, the *Concilium Trium Daciarum* dates from the reign of Philip the Arab (IDR III/2, 81). Current thinking, however, is that the *concilium* must have remained in existence until at least 257, when the minting of so-called *Provincia Dacia* bronze issues ceased under Gallienus (Ardevan 1998, 335-336).

Minting of *Provincia Dacia* issues began under the reign of Philip the Arab, potentially to meet the shortage of bronze coinage from Rome (Alföldy-Găzdac and Găzdac 2004, 2005; Găzdac 2004).³⁹ The combined disappearance of the epigraphic record from urban centres, the cessation of *Provincia Dacia* issues, and the slow trickle of coinage into the region have

³⁸ Piso (1974, 308), Petolescu (1995, 120), Găzdac (2002b, 75), and Ardevan and Zerbini (2007, 194) all cite the evidence of these hoards as evidence of raids in into Transylvania. Bogdan-Cătăniciu (1981, 53) doubts the reliability of relying on the hoards without further archaeological evidence, while more recently Găzdac (2012, 176, 180) is silent on the issue.

³⁹ See Martin (1992) for an overview of third century provincial coinage from the Middle Danube region

been considered to point to administrative problems in Roman *Dacia* as early as the late 250s (Macrea 1978, 169-174, Protase 2000, 154-156; Suciu 2000, 221). In turn, these administrative problems may have spiralled into a tax crisis that resulted in the *Dacian* provinces being bankrupted (Haynes and Hanson 2004, 24).

As with Southwest Germany, the difficulty in dating the material culture in the final Roman phases of the region has led to the coins themselves being the main focus of study (Macrea 1978, 168; Găzdac 1998, 2002a). This is also in large part due to the fact that the coins can be used independently of site data (Găzdac 2002b, 16). Although the sudden cutoff in coin circulation occurs before the cessation of minting *Provincia Dacia* issues, an Aurelian withdrawal emphasized in the literary sources has been favoured in archaeological narratives (Macrea 1941; 1969, 445-456). Thus, another scenario is created where the archaeological evidence has been forced into a timeline derived from a particular reading of ancient accounts.

The evidence from the two legionary forts at *Potaissa* and *Apulum* is striking. Only twenty coins from the sole reign of Gallienus have been found at *Potaissa*, while fifty-three come from *Apulum* (Găzdac 1998, 231). Furthermore, the auxiliary forts at *Porolissum* and *Gherla* in Transylvania and *Drobeta* on the Danube at the southwest extremity of *Dacia* paint a similar picture. With the end of the reign of Philip the Arab new issues decrease dramatically (Găzdac 2002a, 738). Likewise, the civil settlements in *Dacia Apulensis* and *Porolissensis* also show a dramatic decrease in coin circulation despite being the most heavily populated areas in the region. Although internal problems beginning with the reign of Gallienus are apparent in both the numismatic and epigraphic records, there is still no conclusive evidence as to what these were. What is certain is that the abandonment of *Dacia* was a culmination of a gradual process. While citing the Aurelian date of 271 is convenient, in reality it is impossible to assign a precise point in time to the event (Horedt 1982, 31). However, most recent studies now state that abandonment began during the reign of Gallienus.⁴⁰

In summary, the lack of concrete literary evidence on the abandonment of the region and the nascent state of archaeological research in Transylvania has led to conclusions being largely based on the numismatic evidence. Moreover, the tendency to use the archaeological narrative to push political agendas has meant that much of the nuances have been overlooked until recently. Nevertheless, evidence of burning at frontier sites south of Transylvania

⁴⁰ Macrea and Tudor (1960, 465), Macrea (1969, 454), Petolescu (1995, 125), Benea (1996, 32), Bărbulescu (1998, 81), Opreanu (2000, 402), and Ardevan and Zerbini (2007, 204) all accept this hypothesis, however Gudea and Löbuscher (2006, 97) still maintain an Aurelian date of 271.

coupled with the distribution of hoarding patterns have been used to justify Carpic and Gothic incursions into the Transylvanian heartland of Roman Dacia. The lack of archaeological evidence within the region, as well as the scant epigraphic evidence makes these conclusions tenuous at best. Indeed, the epigraphic evidence towards the end of the province seems to portray a picture of investment and stability in the region by both the government and the local population. The minting of the short-lived *Provincia Dacia* coinage, however, would seem to imply that the central administration did have difficulty supplying the region with hard currency. In turn, the creation of a perfect storm scenario where the region was isolated from the Central Empire, and thus from its resources may have led to a situation where the Roman apparatus had no option but to relinquish its control of the region.

2.4 Previous comparative study between Southwest Germany and Transylvania

Finally, it is worthwhile to examine what links already exist in research between the two regions. By covering these works it will become apparent that despite the geographical and chronological similarities of these regions, little has been done to examine the final period of Roman occupation in tandem.

Although there has been token acknowledgement in the archaeological literature stretching back to the first half of the twentieth century, this has been limited to passing commentary on the fact that both regions were ‘lost’ in the mid-third century (Matei 2018, 79).⁴¹ Though a few basic numismatic comments on the evaporation of coin supply in the mid-third century and on the epigraphic data have been made, comparative study between Transylvania and Southwest Germany tends to be from the perspective of the literary narrative (Macrea 1941, 295-297; Morzewicz, L. 1998; Steidl 2000a, 120; Găzdac 2010, 199; Matei 2018). These conclusions were summed up in De Blois’ (1976, 5) monograph on the emperor Gallienus, which asserts that while both provinces were lost under Gallienus to barbarian incursion, the *Agri Decumates* were lost a decade before *Dacia*, which outside of *Dacia Inferior/Malvensis* was secured.⁴² Later, Hind (1984, 191-192) would use the literary evidence for the abandonment of *Dacia* in an attempt to justify the transference of the population of the *Agri Decumates* across the Rhine to the *Decem Pagi* of Late Antiquity. While the idea is at first enticing, it unfortunately holds little weight when the literary sources are put under scrutiny.⁴³

⁴¹ Matei (2018, 79, footnotes 17-21) has painstakingly gathered the references for both regions in tandem, including their conquest, development, and abandonment.

⁴² This would mean, of course, that Transylvania (*Dacia Apulensis* and *Porolissensis*) would have been effectively cut off from the rest of the empire, but this fact is overlooked by De Blois.

⁴³ *Decem Pagi* are located between the modern-day cities of Saarburg and Strasbourg. It would be convenient to identify a link in imperial policy of abandoning Roman dominion in the mid-third century. However, Hind failed to take into account the debate around the linking of the *Breviarum* of Festus, Eutropius, or the *Vita Divi Aureliani* with the Enmannische Kaisergeschichte, despite it being a century old. Neither was any

In addition to these, a brief analysis was made based on the identification of the three transfluvial frontiers of the *Agri Decumates*, *Dacia*, and *Mesopotamia* being lost presumably under Gallienus (Okamura 1996b). Although Okamura makes the important correlations of chronological and geographical similarities, the concept is not taken further. The sole archaeological comparative study focuses on the fifth and sixth centuries, looking mainly at the settlement patterns of established Germanic peoples in both Southwest Germany and Transylvania, and therefore has little to say about the situation in the mid-third century. (Schmauder 2002).⁴⁴

Despite sustained acknowledgement of the general similarities in the end of Roman rule in these regions, little has been done to examine the evidence in depth. In what work that has been done, the major factors that make this comparison critical have been noted, but not been given much thought besides a token acknowledgement.

2.5 Conclusion

It is important now to reflect on what is implied when the pieces are all put together. Multiple similarities make the comparison of Southwest Germany and Transylvania during the mid-third century an ideal one. The lack of more expansive literary evidence for the end of both regions has led to a reliance on the archaeological narrative, which has then been used in an attempt to confirm the fragmentary evidence of the literary record. This, it could be argued, is due in no small part to the common sources for both regions of Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, and Orosius. Thus, a situation is created where the literary narrative leads the archaeological narrative, which in turn reinforces the literary narrative. Furthermore, the archaeological narrative has been sequestered to the numismatic data, which has been a practice common in studies of the mid-third century in the Roman world more generally. This could further be argued to be symptomatic of the excavation methodology of both Southwest Germany and Transylvania combined with the lack of universally-diagnostic reliable dating criteria in the mid-third century (Drinkwater 1987, 215).

Both regions thus have similar narratives during the mid-third century. Supposedly weakened by barbarian invasions, Southwest Germany and Transylvania then saw a short resurgence in both civic works and the infrastructure, visible in the epigraphic record. While this highlights that the populations in the regions had all intention of things continuing on as normal,

archaeological information consulted. Furthermore, the discovery of the Augsburg Siegesaltar in 1992 would discredit much of his argument, as it would with many others.

⁴⁴ Although Schmauder's (2002) essay is somewhat germane to the topic of the current study, it must be noted that the source material used for Transylvania was limited to German language publications, thus eliminating much of the available data.

problems in coin circulation show that the administration may have been having problems keeping both frontier regions financially solvent. Although there is evidence from Southwest Germany that a number of sites ended in a fiery destruction, outside of Niederbieber, there is little evidence of violence, leaving the causes of the end of Roman rule in each region an open-ended question. The next chapter will examine the specific classes of data used to illuminate the narrative. By examining the potentials and shortcomings of the source material, the avenues by which further in-depth analysis is possible between the end of these two frontier regions will become clear.

3. Sources and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter completes the task set out in Chapters One and Two of framing the narrative for the study. Thus far, the scope of the thesis and its importance in the larger field of third century studies has been addressed, and the narrative for both regions has been recounted and assessed. It is now important to examine the scope and limitations of the source material, which will inform the methodological framework to conduct the study. As stated in section 1.1, the third century is by nature a period during which the ability to date artefacts with any precision is nearly impossible outside of coins and inscriptions. This has led to most studies of the period relying on these historical sources of information (Millett 1981, 528-529). The difficulty in dating finds becomes even more pronounced as the century progresses and the most problematic aspects of the third century are manifested from reign of Gordian III (238-244) through the reign of Aurelian (270-275). Thus, this study breaks away from the corpus of previous work and takes the site record as its main source of data.

The site data has several limitations, due to three main factors. The first is a matter of dating. Through the calibration of numerous dates given by ceramics, coinage, small finds, and in rare instances, scientific dating, a general date range for occupation of a site is given (Reece 1976). In the best of circumstances, date ranges for finds can be ‘fuzzy’, while historical dates are not. This becomes augmented when there is a paucity of datable artefacts, as in the third century. Second, is the method and scale of excavation. There are real dangers in the extrapolation of data from limited excavation results, especially when these are conducted without reference to stratigraphy, or are obscured by baulks left in to record the section. Third, is the level of publication. If there is no coherency in the publication of a site, or it remains unpublished for long periods of time, many of the findings can be divorced from the wider site context.

The main dataset for this thesis is the collection of site records from each region, which consists of 91 published sites from Southwest Germany and 55 from Transylvania. As such, the methodological framework for identifying major structural changes is discussed. These include evidence for repair, demolition, and destruction. Material and numismatic hoarding is also included as these have historically been used as key pieces of evidence in narratives from both regions. A framework is then established for comparing the assemblages of single coin finds, 34,688 from Southwest Germany and 10,488 from Transylvania. This includes both stray and site finds, established using methodologies that have been successful in examining

province-wide and regional patterns in Britain. A method of cataloguing numismatic hoards, 30 from Southwest Germany and 28 from Transylvania, in order to test their suitability for use as evidence, is constructed. Finally, epigraphic material for each region, 1302 inscriptions from Southwest Germany and 1805 from Transylvania, is collated and separated into different categories and then further separated by inscriptions that are either datable only to the Roman period, broadly datable by century, and those datable with a higher level of precision. Datable inscriptions are then separated by dynasty in order to examine trends in the epigraphic habit. The result is a robust methodology that focuses on the site records, but also employs traditional source material that allows the study to test existing narratives and look for similarities and differences between both regions.

Thus, in order to work through these issues, general problems with third century source material are addressed, with each type followed by consideration of the scope and limitations of the source material from each region. This is followed by a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of site reports as a source of data in both Southwest Germany and Transylvania.

3.2 Ceramics

The study of ceramics is not only crucial to understanding regional and larger patterns of the economy (Peacock 1982, 152-153), but it can also be used to investigate themes of identity and community (Jobey 1979). While these are beyond the scope of the thesis, ceramics are generally the main dating material in the archaeological record. It is important to examine the scope and limitations of mid-third century ceramics in general, and the state of ceramic studies in both regions. This section covers the problematic nature of dating ceramics in the mid-third century, followed by the scope and limitations of ceramic data in Southwest Germany and Transylvania. Applying more recently recalibrated dating evidence for ceramics to sites has often not been possible, as the data for so many sites cannot readily be reappraised on the basis of surviving documentation. Moreover, date ranges of ceramic forms help to build the dating of the larger site narrative, but it is important to remember that the entrance of the sherd of a ceramic vessel into the archaeological record does not reflect the date of acquisition and discard by its owner in a predictable manner (Peña 2007, 6-8). This is especially important to remember when dealing with periods with small quantities of diagnostic material.

For mid-third century ceramics, the production centre of Rheinzabern is used. The end of production at Rheinzabern has historically been tied into the *Limesfall* narrative of Southwest Germany despite being located in the Rhineland Palatinate. Following a discussion of Rheinzabern, the challenges inherent in dating ceramics from both regions are reviewed.

3.2.1 Fine wares and the mid-third century: Rheinzabern

The red-slipped fine ware, known as Samian Ware in English language sources and *terra sigillata* elsewhere, that was mass produced in large workshops across the Empire, is the best source for dating archaeological sites due to its wide distribution. Widescale production began in the Late Republic and spanned the tenure of the Roman Empire (Peacock 1982, 117-118; Greene 1992, 29-31). Studies of Samian Ware have evolved considerably since basic typologies were established (Fabroni 1841; Dragendorff 1895) and form and fabric further elaborated (Oswald and Pryce 1920). Extensive research on the major production centres of Arezzo in Italy, La Graufesenque and Lezoux in France, and Rheinzabern in the Rhineland Palatinate in Germany has resulted in the publication of exhaustive works in the modern period on the identification of potters' stamps (Hartley and Dickson 2008), as well as further analytical studies focused on trade and the economy (Fulford and Durham 2013).⁴⁵ While the focus of recent analytic studies has been on the earlier production centres at Arezzo, La Graufesenque, and Lezoux (Mees 1995; 2012; Fulford and Durham 2013), the production centre at Rheinzabern, which produced fine wares from the early Antonine period to the early fourth century, is largely missing from these works. This is in no small part due to the difficulties of working with mid-third century material.

Dating of Samian Ware has historically been based on connecting larger assemblages of material from 'dated sites', that is, sites that have been deemed to have some connection to the historical record (Greene 1992, 25-26). Military sites have been the primary centres of investigation for this, especially on the Continent. The early advancement of the frontier in Southwest Germany has led investigation due to its connection to historically attested events, such as the temporary Augustan advancement of the frontier from the Rhine to the Elbe (Greene 1992, 25). Further, dendrochronological dating or coin dating of deposits with ceramics been a catalyst for discussion (Greene 1992, 25; Kortüm 1998; Reece 2012). Abandonment of sites, and therefore the Samian assemblages associated with these final phases of occupation have been difficult to assign a confident date range. This comes down mainly to the small number of larger assemblages available for research. Though other assemblages exist, most come from destruction deposits associated by their excavators with the Alemannic raids of 233 such as the fortlet at Butzbach-Degerfeld (Simon 1968), the extramural settlements at Butzbach (Müller 1968), Langenhain (Simon and Köhler 1992), and

⁴⁵ For major works on the Italic production centre of Arezzo see Fabroni (1841) and Mees (2002; 2012); South Gaulish La Graufesenque, Balty and Schaad (2007) and Mees (1995; 2012); Central Gaulish Lezoux, Bémont and Jacob (1986) and Bet et al. (1987); East Gaulish Rheinzabern, Ludowici (1905), Ricken and Fischer (1963), Ricken and Thomas (2005), Mees (2002), and Hissnauer (2014).

Ober-Florstadt (Biegert and Steidl 2011), or *Limesfall* such as the forts at Niederbieber (Oelmann 1914) and Holzhausen (Pferdehirt 1976). Modern studies have attributed the dwindling amount of late Rheinzabern evidence to economic decline (Kortüm and Mees 1998; Mees 2002; King 2013). Historically, though, the paucity of evidence has been interpreted as the fear of merchants to deliver goods across long distances, especially into Southwest Germany (Pferdehirt, 1976, 23-29; Bernhard 1981, 88; Seitz 1999, 177). Thus, 233 and 260 were given as the possible end dates for large scale production at Rheinzabern in early studies (Oelmann 1914; Müller 1968; Nuber 1969; Pferdehirt 1976).

Despite the difficulties in interpretation, there has been substantial work on material from Rheinzabern (Ludowici 1905; Ricken and Fischer 1963; Ricken and Thomas 2005; Hissnauer 2014; 2016), and its presence at sites in Southwest Germany in particular (Müller 1968; Pferdehirt 1976; Simon and Köhler 1992), but it was not until Bernhard's (1981) study that a classification system for the dating of Rheinzabern ware was created. Bernhard (1981) separated production into three main phases based on evidence of potters' stamps from dated assemblages, with groups IIIa-b representing potters that were active during the survey period of the thesis (*tab. 3.1*). Though he assigned the historical dating of 260 to the end of production, he admitted that evidence could extend as far as 275, with the destruction of Rheinzabern (Bernhard 1981, 90). This dating, however, is still tied to the historical invasion of the Franks into the Rhineland Palatinate in 275. A coin of the Gallic Emperor of Postumus dated 259/260-268 was found in the destruction deposits associated with the end of major production (Bernhard 1981, 90, note 54; Mees 2002, 113).

Bernhard (1981, 90-91) himself acknowledged that there was evidence for production on a local level into the fourth century, which has been further confirmed in recent studies (Hissnauer 2014; 2016). There have been multiple studies attempting to recalibrate the dating of potters' stamps to more specific periods using archaeological contexts rather than historical dating (Bittner 1986; Kortüm and Mees 1998; Mees 2002; King 2013). However, the general dating of late Rheinzabern ware has not changed. There is a clear historical bias in the interpretation of the end of large-scale output at Rheinzabern due to the largest datasets being confined to sites associated with historic events. It is not clear, however, if available data at some point will give a more nuanced perspective.

Bernhard Group I			Bernhard Group II			Bernhard Group III					
	Date range	Potter		Date range	Potter		Date range	Potter			
Ia	c. 140-170	Januarius I	IIa	c.170-early 3rd c.	Comitalis IV-VI	IIIa	c. 230-260	Julius II-Julianus I			
		Reginus I			B F Attoni (Atto I)			Victorinus II-III			
		Cobnertus I-III			Belsus II-III			Januarius II			
		Firmus I			Cerialis VI			Respectinus I-II			
Cerialis I-V	Castus	Marcellinus									
Arvernicus-Lutaeus	Respectinus	E 48/49									
Ib	c. 170-early 3rd c.	Comitalis I-III			Florentinus	IIIb	c. 230-275	Victor I			
		Belsus I			Mammilianus			Victor II-Januco			
		Lucanus			Firmus II			Victor III			
		Reginus II-Virilis			Justinus			Perpertuus			
		Cerialis group A-B			Juvenis I			Julianus II			
					Pupus-Juvenis II			Statutus I-II			
	Pupus-Juvenis II	Severianus									
	Atto II	Severianus-Gemellus									
	Reginus II	Pervincus I									
	Attilus	E30/34									
	Augustinus I	Pervincus II (E31)									
	E25/26	E35									
					IIb	c. 170-early 3rd c.	Augustinus II-III				
							Julius I				
							Lupus				
							Victorinus I				
			IIc	early 3rd c.	E8						
					Verecundus I-II						
					Regulinus						
					Peregrinus						
					Helenius						
					Marcellus I-II						
					Augustalis						
			Primitivus I-IV								
					wares A and B with O 382/383						

Table 3. 1: Dating of Rheinzabern potters' stamps based on the classification of Bernhard (1981) (after King 2013, 6)

3.2.2 Ceramics in Southwest Germany

As noted above, much of the dating criteria for Samian ware comes from the assemblages at auxiliary forts in the region, especially in the case of Rheinzabern. In general, there has been a focus on the production and distribution of local and imported fine wares in the region, with local coarse ware production largely overlooked in most studies (Biegert and Helfert 2015). For most of the past century, any coarse ware evidence besides diagnostic sherds was discarded (Biegert and Helfert 2015). This makes quantification and comparison between sites difficult, as the standard method of quantification in Germany is by sherd count. In the past two decades, there has been a change in the approach to studying coarse wares, and local production centres, especially in the Wetterau region, have been extensively researched (Rupp 1987; Biegert 1999; Biegert and Steidl 2011). However, few researched local coarse wares extend into the third century, with the production centre at Groß-Gerau ending in the early second century (Helfert 2010, 56-57) and production of Wetterauer Ware ending in the 130s (Rupp 1987, 56).

The production of later-dated coarse wares is frequently tied to historic events. Thus, for example, Weißtongie Ware is not dated past the Alemannic raids of 233 (Biegert and Steidl

2011). Urmitzer ware, from Urmitz-Weißenthurm in the Rhineland Palatinate (Friedrich 2012), has been the primary ceramic evidence used outside of Bernhard Group IIIa-b Rheinzabern as evidence for post-233 activity in the region. Although Urmizter ware continued in production into the early fourth century (Friedrich 2012, 262), its presence in Southwest Germany is not normally ascribed to contexts post-dated to 260. This is largely due to its initial association with Niederbieber (Oelmann 1914; Biegert and Helfert 2015) and the site's supposed destruction in 259/260.

Oelmann's (1914) publication of the ceramic finds from Niederbieber was the first extensive catalogue of coarse wares from the region. Consequently, the interpretation of the vessel forms associated with the assemblage with the *Limesfall* narrative has stuck, creating a 'Niederbieber Horizon' of 259/260 in regional studies (King 2013, 6). However, there is progress in recalibrating the dates of certain forms. Heising (2003) has demonstrated that production of Niederbieber type 33 beakers continued into the late third century with finds from outside the region post-dating the traditional *Limesfall* date into late third and early fourth century contexts. The potential for recalibrating the ceramic dates of the latest phases of many sites in Southwest Germany is high, though much of the recent evidence is slow to catch on in the study of ceramics in the region.

3.2.3 Ceramics in Transylvania

The tradition of ceramic studies in Roman *Dacia* is fairly recent. The first major publication on ceramics is Popilian's (1976) *Ceramica romană din Oltenia*, which despite not covering Transylvania, was still an important milestone in identifying regional ceramic forms.

Following this study, the importance for maintaining a uniform methodology was argued by Bogdan-Cătănicu (1980), who attempted to set an agenda that would bring the level of Daco-Roman ceramic studies on par with other traditions (Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, 16-17).

Unfortunately, Bogdan-Cătănicu's (1980) call has largely gone unanswered, and regional ceramic studies are still in their infancy.

Due to sporadic publication and little stratigraphic excavation, there are few, if any assemblages, especially of regional coarse wares that can be dated with confidence. Ceramic assemblages, if recorded at all, are usually published separately from the excavation data, creating a disconnect between the site records and the material. Historically, there has been no quantification of ceramic material either, making regional patterns and site comparison impossible based on published information. Most regional forms are dated generally to the second-third century, the timespan of Roman occupation in the region.

Locally produced stamped wares in the northern part of Transylvania have been the particular focus of investigation warranting an entire edited volume (Gudea 1997e) and a monograph (Filip 2008). Though incredibly precise dating, down to the year has been given for forms of stamped ware, specifically in the mid-third century (Filip 2008, 71-72), there has been no discussion of the dating of contexts from which these finds come, leaving the chronologies dubious. Though still a long way from usable data, the foundations for regional assemblages have been laid by Rusu-Bolindeț, (2007) with the catalogue of ceramics from Cluj-Napoca. This catalogue established a series of fabrics and forms from dated contexts in the town. Unfortunately, third century contexts in general did not produce many ceramic finds (Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, 375, 432). Although there are still no convincingly dated mid-third century assemblages, further identification and quantification of Severan assemblages from Alba Iulia-*Apulum* (Ciauşescu 2005; Ciauşescu and Gligor 2005) and the development of quantification and recording methods at the *Liber Pater* sanctuary of Partoş-*Apulum* (Symonds and Haynes 2007) are promising signs that future studies may be able to use ceramic data from the region. However, as it stands, ceramic forms from Transylvania in particular and Roman *Dacia* as a whole are unusable to date phases of occupation of sites.

3.3 Numismatic data

Walton (2012, 8) stresses the importance of numismatic data as more than just dating evidence in the archaeological record. In third century studies, this has been recently seen in Manders' (2012) study of the iconography of coinage, revealing the messages certain images were meant to convey to coin users during this period. Numismatic evidence becomes difficult to work with in the third century, due to drastic changes in the monetary system and debasement of currency, as well as a difficulty in dating coins in most cases to more than the general reign of an emperor. Further, as covered in Chapter Two, coin supply has been an important theme in the narratives of final Roman periods of Southwest Germany and Transylvania. However, their primary use has been as a dating factor for a *terminus post quem* of the end of Roman activity at archaeological sites in both regions. Though this approach to dating activity on sites is not new, it is important to remember that a least some time must have passed between the minting of a coin and its introduction into the archaeological record (Casey 1986, 75-76). Indeed, despite there being numerous cautions to solely relying on coin dating as a *terminus post quem* (Noeske 1996; Kortüm 1996: 38-44; Heising 2008, 99-109; Witschel 2011, 40-44; Heeren 2016), this is in many cases still the primary dating evidence cited for mid-third century activity. The development of the antoninianus, silver coinage unique to the third century, stands at the heart of some of these

debates. The following sections discuss this as a major numismatic trend of the period, then looking more widely at the source material for each region.

3.3.1 Third century numismatic trends: the antoninianus

The following section is not meant as a definitive study of the antoninianus, but rather a brief overview of the key factors concerning its production and debasement during its chief period of production from the reign of Gordian III (238-244) through the reign of Aurelian (270-275). Overall, the Roman monetary system in the third century is marked by three features. First is the debasement of the silver currency beginning with the ascension of Septimius Severus (193-211), which continues into the third century, reaching its low point under the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268) (Callu 1969; Howgego 1995, 136; Harl 1996, 126-127). Second is the collapse of the tripartite coinage system based on bronze, silver, and gold coinage, followed by the reintroduction and full adoption of radiate silver coinage, also known as the antoninianus (Bland 1996, 74-76; 2012, 515). Third is the opening of provincial ‘branch’ mints under the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (253-260) to supplement coinage emanating from the central mint at Rome (Harl 1996, 144; Bland 2012, 526-527).

The study of Roman coinage has largely been through the filter of the historical record. The coinage of the third century, a convoluted and difficult subject, is no exception (Callu 1969; 1975; Crawford 1975; Howgego 1995, 136-140; 1996; Harl 1996, 125-157; Bourne 2001). While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to elaborate an historic narrative of coinage in the third century, it is worth noting a few salient points referring to the debasement of silver coinage associated with the central mint at Rome and its implications for coin circulation.⁴⁶

Debasement of the denarius throughout the history of the Principate is not unique to the third century. However, with the ascension of Septimius Severus (193-211), a policy of increasing the pay of the military over the Severan dynasty (193-235) and into the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235-238) set off a sequence of debasement and inflation (Abdy 2012, 510). Army pay before the Severans, had stood at some 300 denarii per year (Abdy 2012, 510). By end of Maximinus Thrax’s reign, estimates put the sum between 1350 (Alston 1994, 115) to 1800 denarii (Speidel 1992, 106) per year. Thus, the noticeable decline in silver content began under Marcus Aurelius, while noticeable debasement began under Septimius Severus (*tab.* 3.2). Coins under Severus, however, were minted to retain the same size and weight of earlier issues, and would not have appeared to be different from earlier coinage to the naked eye (Harl 1996, 126-127). Debasement continued under Caracalla (211-217), who introduced a

⁴⁶ For major studies of third century coinage see Callu (1969; 1975), Crawford (1975), Göbl (1993; 2000), Bland (1996; 2012), and Estiot (2012).

new type of coinage, known alternatively as the 'radiate' due to the presence of a solar crown, or as the 'antoninianus' based on Caracalla's original name of 'Antoninus' in 215. The new coinage was valued at presumably twice the value of the denarius, though it only contained 1.6 times the silver as the denarius (Bland 2012, 515-516). The antoninianus continued to be issued by Macrinus (217-218) and Elagabalus (218-222), though their minting was stopped in 219. From then on only denarii were issued by Severus Alexander (222-235), Maximinus Thrax (235-258), and Gordian I and II (238) (Bland 2012, 516).

The antoninianus was revived during the short reign of Pupienus and Balbinus (238), with a slightly lighter weight at 4.8g, and more debased, at roughly 70% of the silver content of two denarii, than the issues of Caracalla (Harl 1996, 129). Antoniniani continued to function alongside the denarius into the reign of Gordian III (238-244). After the final large-scale emission of the denarius in 241, minting of the denomination ceased except in very small quantities (Harl 1996, 129; Bland 2012, 516; Elks 1972). Over the next three decades the value of the coin declined dramatically effectively reducing the denomination to billon, with four noted periods of decline; from 242-253, 253-268, and 268-270, with the silver content of the coinage reaching its lowest point in 270 at 0.06g of silver (Bland 2012, 517; Harl 1996, 130; *tab 3.3*).⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Metrological studies of the silver content of Roman coins are based on the study of issues in coin hoards rather than single finds. For studies on the silver content of coinage see Tyler (1975), Walker (1978), Besly and Bland (1983), and Cope et al. (1997)

Year	Emperor	Total weight	Silver content	
		Grammes	Fineness	Grammes
148-161	Antoninus Pius	3.21	83.6	2.68
161-168	Marcus Aurelius	3.23	79.79	2.58
168-170	Marcus Aurelius	3.24	82.13	2.66
170-180	Marcus Aurelius	3.26	79.07	2.58
180-185	Commodus	3.07	76.18	2.34
186	Commodus	2.98	74.25	2.21
193	Pertinax	3.16	87.11	2.75
193	Didius Julianus	2.95	81.33	2.4
193-194	Septimius Severus	3.14	78.42	2.46
194-196	Septimius Severus	3.07	64.58	1.98
196-211	Septimius Severus	3.22	56.28	1.81
212	Caracalla	3.23	51.32	1.66
217-218	Macrinus	3.15	57.85	1.82
219	Elagabalus	3.05	46.39	1.41
222-228	Severus Alexander	3	43.03	1.29
229-230	Severus Alexander	3.24	45.11	1.46
231-235	Severus Alexander	2.94	50.56	1.49
236-238	Maximinus Thrax	3.07	46	1.41
238	Gordian I & II	2.77	62.8	1.74
238	Pupienus & Balbinus	2.8	55	1.54
241	Gordian III	3.03	48.11	1.46

Table 3. 2: Silver content in denarii from Antoninus Pius to Gordian III (after Harl 1996, 127, *tab 6.1*)

Current interpretation sees the emperors of the mid-third century recalling the coinage of their predecessors and melting them down into coins with noticeably smaller weights and smaller silver content (Harl 1996, 130-131). Thus, as the amount of coinage being minted increased exponentially, the silver content diminished throughout (Depeyrot and Hollard 1987). The resultant overflow of severely debased and inflated silver coinage, and the disruption of the Augustan monetary system based on bronze, silver, and gold coinage, led to a collapse of public confidence in the Roman monetary system (Harl, 1996, 132). In many aspects of life this was replaced by a system of ‘payment in kind’ of goods rather than coinage (Estiot 2012, 540). The practice of mints under Gallienus to issue antoniniani with a copper core and silver wash that eroded during circulation furthered this (Harl 1996, 132).

Year	Emperor	Total weight	Silver content	
		Grammes	Fineness	Grammes
215	Caracalla	5.09	52.12	2.65
238	Pupienus & Balbinus	4.79	49.47	2.37
238	Gordian III	4.5	48.77	2.19
241	Gordian III	4.43	44.68	1.98
243	Gordian III	4.16	41.63	1.73
244	Philip the Arab	4.12	43.12	1.78
248	Philip the Arab	4.12	47.07	1.94
250	Trajan Decius	3.97	41.12	1.63
251	Trebonius Gallus	3.46	35.94	1.24
253	Aemilian	3.53	35.5	1.25
253	Valerian	3.1	21.86	0.68
255-257	Valerian	3	17.18	0.52
259-260	Valerian	3.07	19	0.58
260-261	Gallienus	3.03	17.8	0.54
262-266	Gallienus	2.97	15.4	0.46
262-266	Gallienus	2.75	13.05	0.36
262-266	Gallienus	2.81	8.7	0.24
267	Gallienus	2.64	6	0.16
268	Claudius II	2.95	3.16	0.09
269	Claudius II	2.6	1.71	0.04
270	Claudius II	3.39	2.85	0.1
270	Quintillus	2.5	2.62	0.07
270	Aurelian	3.15	2.64	0.08
274	Aurelian	3.88	5	0.19

Table 3. 3: Silver content of antoniniani from Caracalla to Aurelian (after Harl 1996, 130, *tab.* 6.2)

With the breakaway of the Gallic Empire in 260 under Postumus, there was an intent to increase the content of silver in coins minted in the breakaway region, but by the end of Postumus' reign, the silver content began to slip (Bland 2012, 518; Estiot 2012, 542). By the reign of Tetricus I, the silver content in Gallic Empire antoniniani had reached lower levels than those under Aurelian in the Central Empire (Bland 2012, 518; Estiot 2012, 545 *tab.* 3.4).

Recovery from debasement of the coinage was attempted under Aurelian in 274, with the introduction of the *aurelianus*. This new coin was minted to replace the antoninianus with an improved silver content and a valuation of two antoniniani to one *aurelianus* (Estiot 2012, 546). However, monetary problems would continue until the ascension of Diocletian in 285, and the overhaul of the monetary system under his watch in 294-295, which saw the introduction of two more silver coins, the *argenteus*, modelled off of the Neronian denarius, and the *nummus* (Estiot 2012, 548).

Although the initial debasement of currency may have been to increase the coffers for pay rises for the military, a lack of new bullion was the primary factor for continued debasement as the third century progressed (Howgego 1992; 4-12; 1994, 137; Bland 2012, 519). Chief among the factors cited are the exhaustion of silver mines at Riotinto in Spain (Bland 2012,

519; Jones 1980) and payments to foreign adversaries, such as the 500,000 aurei that Philip the Arab paid Shapur I of the Sassanid Empire to fend off invasion (Harl 1996, 129; Bland 2012, 519; Millar 1993, 154).

Bland (2012, 521) argues that while the increase in minting during this period is traditionally seen as a collapse of the monetary system, it had the ‘positive’ effect of spreading the coin-using economy far wider than it had ever been before in the Northwestern Provinces. He does caution that this spread may actually be a modern phenomenon, namely, better publication of coin finds in Northwest Europe than other regions of the Roman Empire. In converse to this observation, however, as seen in sections 6.2, 9.2, and 10.4.2, the exact opposite is seen in the assemblages of Southwest Germany and Transylvania where coin circulation experiences a severe drop during the reigns of Trajan Decius (249-251) and Trebonianus Gallus (251-253) that does not recover to previous levels. Regardless, the problematic nature of the coinage of the mid-third century is apparent in the overall discussion of inflation and debasement. Caution should be taken in ascribing specific historic events as the primary factor in any process, but it is clear that from an economic perspective, the period of 238-275 is one of profound change in the Roman World.

Year	Emperor	Silver content		
		Grammes	Fineness	Grammes
260	Postumus	3	20	0.6
261-267	Postumus	3.35	15	0.5
268-269	Postumus	3	8	0.24
268-269	Laelianus	3	4	0.12
269	Marius	3	4	0.12
269-270	Victorinus	3	2.5	0.08
270-274	Tetricus I	2.4	1.5	0.04

Table 3. 4: Silver content of antoniniani minted under the Gallic Empire (after Harl 1996, 145, *tab.* 6.5)

3.3.2 Numismatic data from Southwest Germany

In addition to numismatic catalogues in site reports, coin finds in Germany have been codified into the *Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Deutschland* (FMRD). These catalogue both single coin finds as well as hoards. The series has continually been worked on since the first volumes appeared in the early 1960s. While these volumes provide accessible material for numismatic studies, as is the case with any such monumental work, the material quickly becomes outdated. Volumes relevant to the study area of Southwest Germany include parts of Bavaria (Alföldi et al. 1962; Kellner 1960; 1963; 1970; Kellner et al. 1975; Kellner and Overbeck 1978), Baden-Württemberg (Christ 1963; 1964a; 1964b; 1964c; Kasier-Raiss and Martin 1980; Stribny 1993a; 1993b); Hessen (Schubert 1989a; 1989b; Gorecki 1994a;

1994b) and the Rhineland Palatinate (Franke 1960; Stribrny 1985), and are in some cases over five decades old. The series is still under completion, with the coinage from the important site of Niederbieber (Ritterling, 1901) still awaiting modern publication. Niederbieber's coin lists were identified before the publication of *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (RIC) series, meaning most of the finds are only generally dated to the reign of an emperor, limiting the amount of information obtainable from the assemblage. However, this also affects the number of stray finds for the study, as this dataset in particular is dependent upon the published information in the FMRD volumes.

Coinage from the Gallic Empire makes up 15.9% (316 out of 1987 coins) of the regional numismatic assemblage from the survey period. However, most of the coinage is again only identifiable by the general reign of the emperor. The Normanby and *Cunetio* hoards from Britain (Bland and Burnett 1988; Bland et al. 2018), which provided researchers with the data for more accurate identification of issues, have generally not been employed in FMRD catalogues. Although these issues account for only 316 out of 1987 total coins, it is still a sizable quantity that could benefit from modern identification.

Furthermore, modern works which attempt to give more precise dating to coins from the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (253-260) (Göbl 1993) and Aurelian (270-275) Göbl (2000) are too recent to have been consulted for most of the FMRD volumes, and as such, these coins tend to have a general dating of the reign of the emperors. Thus, while the FMRD series is a convenient reference work in order to establish a dataset for research, it is imperative that coinage from modern excavation reports be consulted in order to obtain a more representative assemblage.

3.3.3 Numismatic data from Transylvania

Numismatic studies, as discussed in section 2.3.2, have played an important part in the narrative in the final decades of Roman control in Transylvania. However, it is only within the past three decades that significant advances have been made in the cataloguing and identification of Roman coinage. These have come in the form of numismatic site catalogues of the provincial capital of Roman *Dacia* at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (Găzdac and Cociş 2004); the legionary fortress and the *municipium* at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and the *colonia* at Partoş-*Apulum* (Găzdac et al. 2009), the legionary fortress and *colonia* at Turda-*Potaissa* (Pişlaru 2012), the auxiliary fort and *municipium* at Moigrad-*Porolissum* (Găzdac and Gudea 2006), and the auxiliary forts a Căşeu and Gilău (Găzdac and Isac 2007), Buciumi (Găzdac and Pripon 2012), and Ilişua (Găzdac et al. 2011). Catalogues for hoarding include Suciu's (2000) catalogue of Roman coin hoards from Roman *Dacia* and Depeyrot and Moisl's (2008)

catalogue of coin hoards from Gordian III (238-244) to Aurelian (270-275) from Romania. Outside of these catalogues, identification can vary widely depending on the author, ranging from simple identifications by emperor and base metal, to Cohen identifications from the mid-nineteenth century, to identifications using RIC. Depending on the level of identification, this can severely limit the amount of information that the coin can provide. There is also an emphasis in studies of Roman coinage to focus solely on the data from the establishment of the province under Trajan in 107 to either the historic abandonment under Aurelian (270-275) or up to Constantine I (306-337) (Găzdac 2002b; 2010; Petac 2011; Munteanu 2017), meaning that coinage from the pre- and post-Roman periods is likely underrepresented in the regional assemblage.

One key exception to the difficulty in identifying coinage is the opening of a provincial mint in the region during the reign of Philip the Arab (244-249), which minted bronze coinage with the legend *PROVINCIA DACIA* (Martin 1991). This makes the mid-third century numismatic assemblage for the region unique, as over half, at 52.6%, is composed of bronze coinage, with *PROVINCIA DACIA* issues making up roughly a third, or 32.9% of the total numismatic assemblage from the region between 238-275.

PROVINCIA DACIA issues are primarily found in Roman *Dacia* and were minted from 246/247-256/257 (Alföldy-Găzdac and Găzdac 2004; 2005; Găzdac and Alföldy-Găzdac 2008). The year of minting, beginning with AN(NUS) I is given on the coins, making their identification easier without the use of reference works. Though this mint is still not well-understood, it is thought to have been located somewhere in Transylvania, likely in *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (Ardevan 1996).

Regardless, the limitations of the widely varying level of recording are seen in Petac's (2011) study which was the first to include a gazetteer of both stray and site finds across Roman *Dacia* as a whole. Of the 158 coins from Petac's (2011) work that were used in the thesis, 133 had no identification beyond an emperor and base metal. Out of the entire period assemblage of 1066 coins, 349, or roughly 32.7% were not identified beyond the base metal and the emperor. While Petac (2011) does appear to use Göbl's (1993; 2000) works in identifying the coinage from the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus and Aurelian, the practice is not commonplace.

3.4 Approaches to interpreting hoards

Hoarding during the third century on the Continent has been connected with fear and barbarian raiding since the earliest large-scale study conducted by Blanchet (1900). This has continued to be the main interpretation of both numismatic and material hoards in both Southwest Germany (Reinecke 1934; Kellner 1953; Okamura 1984; Kos 1995; Künzl 1996; 2001; Fischer 1999) and Transylvania (Pavel 1976; Gerov 1977; Lorient 1976; Suciuc 2000, 138; Găzduc 2010, 140-143; 2012, 175). There has been debate in Britain for the past four decades over interpretation of the practice of hoarding in the Roman period. Questions have been asked as to how far interpretation can be assumed without knowledge of the intention of deposition (Reece 1988; 2015, 93; Millett 1994, 98-100), the effect that the overcomplexity in interpretation of the evidence (Millett 1994, 104; Guest 2015, 105), and of how much a hoard without full knowledge of context or deposition can be interpreted (Bland 2018, 10-11). Though there has been some discussion over the interpretation of third century hoards in Southwest Germany, many of the interpretations still centre on barbarian raiding.

3.4.1 Third century hoarding in Southwest Germany

The two often cited examples of hoarding as evidence for barbarian raiding in the third century are the hoards at Neupotz and Hagenbach. Though not found in Southwest Germany, both were found in the Rhine immediately in the vicinity of the region. The Neupotz hoard, found near Speyer in the Rhineland Palatinate, consists of over 1000 objects including iron tools and fittings, bronze vessels, silver pieces, and wagon fittings, was initially given a *terminus post quem* of 275 based on coin finds (Künzl 1993). The hoard has been interpreted as evidence of Alemannic booty, acquired from the region of Southwest Germany after the *Limesfall*. The hoard supposedly sank in the Rhine as the wagon carrying it was too weighed down (Künzl 1993). The precious metal hoard from Hagenbach consists of over 400 pieces and has also been interpreted as evidence of raiding after the *Limesfall* narrative played out (Bernhard et al. 1990). Künzl (2001, 215) and Petrovszky (2006; 2009) both assert that these hoards are evidence of Alemannic raiding, while Ton Derks (1998, 140) sees them both as a booty and a votive offering, and Schönfelder (2006) sees the hoards are purely votive in nature. Further Millett (1994, 104) doubts the interpretation of Neupotz as a plunder hoard. Though Manning (1972, 245) has noted that metal hoards need not be solely buried in fear, but could be stored for safekeeping or to prevent the objects from falling into the wrong hands, citing the iron nail hoard from the legionary fortress at Inchtuthil as evidence of the latter. Moreover, the publication of the Corbridge Hoard (Allason-Jones and Bishop 1988) provides further evidence of a material hoard being deposited for safekeeping. Nonetheless, Künzl (2001, 219) sees the deposition of hoards in the mid-third century as a *metus*

Germanicus, and compares the pattern to similar horizons, the ‘so-called’ *metus Gallicus* in 376 BC and the *metus Punicus* during the Second Punic War in Italy. Fischer (1999), in his catalogue of material hoards from the mid-third century, follows a similar train of thought, referring to the evidence as ‘Angsthorte’, attributing deposition to fear. However, in most cases, the material could not be accurately dated to mid-third century contexts or given a suitable date range. Without a clear context, iron goods in particular are difficult to date, as there is virtually no change in style over the course of centuries (Manning 1972, 228).

3.4.2 Third century hoarding in Transylvania

In Transylvania, discussion of hoards has been strictly numismatic. This has centred on evidence of the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab (Loriot 1976; Petolescu 1995, 120; Suciuc 2000, 138; Găzdac 2010, 140-141; 2012, 175). Based on hoarding patterns, Transylvania has been argued to be the main theatre of the Wars despite a lack of archaeological evidence. The simplistic interpretation of hoarding as an indicator of violence and fear is not unique to the third century. In recent scholarship, these themes play heavily into the interpretation of hoarding across the entire Roman period (Găzdac 2012). Guest (2015, 102) has recently criticized this approach, stating that the data employed in recent studies has been selectively used to fit into a traditional narrative of emergency and violence. However, this could arguably be due to the poor nature of recording and recovery of hoards in Transylvania; out of 28 mid-third century hoards from the region, only six were fully recovered. Furthermore, only two of those fully recovered were found in excavation, both in a temple complex in the *municipium* of Moigrad-*Porolissum* (Gudea and Tamba 2001, 35-37).

Thus, simplistic interpretations of much of the evidence from both Southwest Germany and Transylvania persist. The problematic nature of dating and context for much of the data has been overlooked in order to fit into a historical narrative. Further, though the data would greatly benefit from it, advances in the discussion of interpretation of hoards in Britain has largely not been applied to the evidence in either region.

3.5 Epigraphic data

This section gives a brief overview of issues with dating and identifying inscriptions, and the general trends in the epigraphic record in the third century. Following this, the scope of data for both regions is examined. Inscriptions, like coins, have largely been the focus research via the historical record (Bodel 2001, 1-2). However, they still are a part of the overall archaeological record, and therefore are critical to bridging the gap between the historical narrative and the archaeological evidence.

3.5.1 General epigraphic issues

In reference to the thesis, the key issue with the epigraphic assemblage is the dating of inscriptions. Though it is generally accepted that the epigraphic habit in the Western Empire reached its nadir during the reign of Trajan Decius (Mrozek 1973, 114-116; MacMullen 1982, 244-246), during collection of the dataset it was striking that over 56% of the entire epigraphic assemblage of 1302 inscriptions from Southwest Germany and over 78% of the 1805 inscriptions from Transylvania were not able to be dated more accurately than 'Roman'. The problematic nature of dating most inscriptions is an issue that has only been addressed in the modern period and many of the entries in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL) and *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (ILS) are not provided with even an approximate date (Bodel 2001, 51-52). This has created a situation where many inscriptions that have been known for the past century or longer could be dated with more accuracy. Chronological indicators for dating inscriptions differ in character (Cooley 2012, 398-399). These may be contextual, textual, or stylistic. Contextual evidence, for example, may consist of grave goods associated with a funerary monument. Textual may reference a consular date, an emperor, *damnatio memoriae*, or the presence or absence of *praenomina*. Stylistic is based on qualities of lettering and decoration (Bodel 2001, 50-51). While contextual evidence may simply provide a *terminus post quem*, chronological indicators may provide a year or a period of months when the inscription was erected (Bodel 2001, 50-51; Cooley 2012, 398). Of the three methods of dating, stylistic is perhaps the most problematic, as it relies on information that is interpretive (Bodel 2001, 50). Key indicative factors in third century dating are the disappearance of *praenomina* with the adoption of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* under Caracalla in 212 (Cooley, 2012, 412) and the adoption of honorific imperial epithets by military units, a practice that also saw widespread adoption under Caracalla and continued into the mid-third century (Fitz 1983).

Inscriptions can also be dated to an historic event and this raises the issue of 'history from square brackets', a term that was coined by Badian (1989). This refers to the epigraphic dangers of building an argument from speculation disguised as fact, by using the supplementary interpretation of heavily fragmented or broken inscriptions to bolster an historic argument. Though the formulaic nature of most Latin inscriptions means that most supplements are uncontroversial, conjecture can imbed itself so deeply into more complicated texts that the appearance of fact can be shifted by a complete reassessment of the epigraphic and historical context (Bodel 2001, 52). This is admittedly a very rare factor. The only true evidence of this from the thesis were two votive altars found in excavation of the intramural bath house of the legionary fortress at Turda-Potaissa which had suffered *damnatio memoriae*

(AE 2012, 1215-1216). Bărbulescu (2012, 189-191) had interpreted the inscriptions coming from the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (253-268), but implied that *damnatio memoriae* would not have been executed on the inscriptions until the end of Gallienus' sole reign in 268, thus confirming that the legionary fortress of the *V Macedonica* was garrisoned until the reign of Claudius II or Aurelian. However, Piso (2014, 218) offered a more conservative interpretation that the altars had indeed been inscribed with the name of the emperor Aemelian, who reigned for a period of a few months in 253. Therefore, taking liberties with the historical narrative via the epigraphic record can potentially have extreme consequences in interpretation.

3.5.2 Epigraphic datasets from Southwest Germany

In addition to the pertinent volumes *CIL* (III for *Raetia* and XIII for *Germania Superior*), there were large-scale undertakings to document the inscriptions of Baden-Württemberg (Haug and Sixt 1900) and Bavaria (Vollmer 1915) in the early twentieth century. Since these early volumes, there have not been major undertakings to document inscriptions on a wide scale. Catalogues for the Odenwald region were published about four decades ago (Castritius et al. 1977; Castritius and Clauss 1980) and these were followed by works detailing the corpus of epigraphic information from Ladenburg (Wiegels 2000) and Dieburg (Matiević and Wiegels 2004). Besides these volumes, newer inscriptions are published in *L'Année Epigraphique*, in stand-alone articles, or if found in excavation, in site monographs. Though Alföldy (2018) published a brief paper on the epigraphic habit of Southwest Germany, inscriptions are largely used in the region as supplementary to archaeological evidence.

3.5.3 Epigraphic datasets from Transylvania

Much of the knowledge of the province of Roman *Dacia* as a whole is based on epigraphic studies, which have produced a number of synthetic works on the political and social history of the province with focus on Transylvania (Piso 1993; 2005; Ardevan 1998; Ciongradi 2007; 2009; Sicoe 2014). In addition to the inscriptions in *CIL* III, epigraphic data for *Dacia Inferior* and *Dacia Apulensis* have been codified into the series *Inscriptiile Daciei Romane* (*IDR*; Russu 1980; 1984; 1988; Piso 2001) which unfortunately does not yet cover *Dacia Porolissensis* in the northern part of Transylvania. However, *IDR* is supplemented by *lapidarium* catalogues from Northern Transylvania (Gudea and Lucăcel 1975; Gaiu 2013; Gaiu and Zagreanu 2011), the corpus of excavated inscriptions from Turda-*Potaissa* (Bărbulescu 2012), and the publication of *Inscriptiones Latinae Daciae* (*ILD*; Petolescu 2005). Newer inscriptions are published either in *L'Année Epigraphique* or in regional journals.

3.6 Site records

The overarching aim of this thesis is to examine the archaeological record in order to see how regional narratives of collapse hold up to the evidence. The previous sections have highlighted the scope and limitations of material used to date archaeological sites with some form of precision; ceramics, coins, and inscriptions. The problems with the material in the mid-third century were highlighted, and the scope of regional material assessed. The following section now looks at the issues with archaeological site records in both regions, and then provides case studies from each region to highlight potential issues with interpretation.

3.6.1 Site records from Southwest Germany

The importance of stratigraphic and open area excavation cannot be understated when interpreting the archaeological record. Modern excavation techniques in the region largely employ stratigraphic excavation, though there is no accepted methodology for excavation in the region, with each state in Germany having its own standards for excavation and recording. Presently, only the state of Brandenburg in Northeast Germany requires single context planning in excavation (Jamie Sewell, *pers. comm.*). In recent years, stratigraphic excavation has started to become the norm in many circumstances in Southwest Germany. This is largely due to the focus of excavation on urban centres in the modern period rather than military sites. Publication has lagged behind excavation. Thus, it is only within the past few decades that monographs containing high-resolution data on many of these sites have seen the light of day. Consequently, much of the extant published material is from sites where the *planum* method is employed as discussed in section 2.2.2. Moreover, it is the data from military sites that still drive the narrative of the end of Roman occupation in the region.

Large scale excavation of the frontier in the region was undertaken by the *Reichs Limeskommission (RLK)* at the turn of the twentieth century, with the publication of these excavations in the series *Der Obergermanisch-Raetische Limes des Römerreichs (ORL)*. Due to the absence of stratigraphic recording on these sites at the time, many of the finds from these excavations are dated in relation to real or imagined historical events, a classic example of this approach being the important site of Niederbieber (Oelmann 1914; Ritterling 1936). Though the thesis uses data from some fourteen *RLK*-affiliated excavations that have been reworked in the modern period, it must be acknowledged that 29 out of the 56 military sites are represented by site reports solely from the *ORL*, though a further thirteen draw on published data from modern excavations.

Site monographs on towns often comprise a collection of data from rescue excavations, stray finds from the vicinity, and the odd research excavation. Publication is usually the result of someone's doctoral studies. Though exceptions exist, such as the research excavation at Groß-Gerau (Wenzel 2009) and the Kellerei excavations at Ladenburg (Kaiser and Sommer 1994), they are generally not the rule.

Along with advances in excavation methodology, scientific dating has become commonplace in the region where timber features are present. While some of these dates may be misleading, having been drawn from used or redeposited objects, overall this approach has helped to date contexts in the region much more accurately. However, only three such dates are relevant to this thesis. Therefore, while there is a massive quantity of available published site data from the region, with difficult periods that are driven by the historical narrative in the best of circumstances such as the third century, it must be used with caution.

3.6.2 Site records from Transylvania

While the data from Southwest Germany does provide some high-resolution data, Transylvanian site reports leave much to be desired. As in Southwest Germany, military sites make up the bulk of excavated sites, and over the course of the past five decades, a steady flow of monographs have appeared, mainly under the aegis of Nicolae Gudea and Dumitru Protase. Fifteen of the 31 military sites have been published as stand-alone monographs or monograph-length articles. However, the method of excavation means that stratigraphic relationships are completely lost in excavation. Common methods of excavation employ sinking 1m wide sondage trenches across sites in order to locate larger structures which are then excavated on their own. The result is that phasing is largely down to the timber and stone construction of forts and is lost outside of coin dating in many instances. The lack of detailed finds recording also means it is difficult to date most ceramics and artefacts with confidence unless they are imports from outside of the region. Stratigraphic excavation does occur in the region, but its employment is sporadic and down to the preference of a small group of researchers (Mustața et al. 2007; Diaconescu et al. 2001; 2012a; Symonds and Haynes 2007; Egri et al. 2018). Outside of the stand-alone monographs for military sites, publications are disparate, and artefacts are usually published separate from a discussion of their context or the archaeological features they come from. This creates a situation where the finds are not able to be dated, let alone placed within a wider context of study, and the sites themselves are only generally dated to the second-third century or the tenure of Roman occupation unless coinage or an inscription is found during excavation. The disparate nature of publication is apparent when examining the number of publications needed in order to

investigate larger settlements in the region for the thesis; 22 reports needed to be consulted for *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, 36 for the entire conurbation of *Apulum*, and nineteen for the auxiliary fort and *municipium* at *Moigrad-Porolissum*. The combination of the keyhole and unstratigraphic excavation, combined with sporadic publication depletes much of the archaeological site material in the region of its usefulness in larger studies. Though there is a small movement to excavate and record stratigraphically, this is not the norm in the region.

3.6.3 Case studies: Miltenberg-Ost and Buciumi

After examining the problems with site records from both regions, the excavations of two auxiliary forts were chosen for case studies to highlight the problems in interpretation. These problems stem from partial excavation, as is the case of Miltenberg-Ost, and non-stratigraphic excavation as is the case of Buciumi. Due to the military sites representing the largest number of excavated sites in both regions, the case studies are representative of the larger assemblage of sites.

The fort at Miltenberg-Ost was the focus of a modern rescue excavation in 1998 (Jae 2000). The results of this excavation have been cited repeatedly as key evidence for mid-third century activity along the frontier in Southwest Germany (Jae and Scholz 2000; Scholz 2006, 99-106; Reuter 2015). The sequence of events at the fort consists of a catastrophic fire sometime in the first third of the third century (Jae 2000, 146). Following this fire, a former barrack range within the fort was backfilled and levelled over, and an intramural bath house was built over the levelled surface (Jae 2000, 199). Evidence for the fire debris and the backfilling and levelling over of the barrack range can be seen in the section of pit 353, which was filled with fire debris and carbonized wood (*fig. 3.1*). On top of this pit, the bath house was constructed, with the construction of a wastewater channel through the former barracks and the construction of a transverse wall. Immediately north of the former barrack range across the *via principalis* a fortification wall was erected over the extant burning layer, implying that the size of the fort has been reduced in this final phase of construction (Jae 2000, 119; *fig. 3.2*).

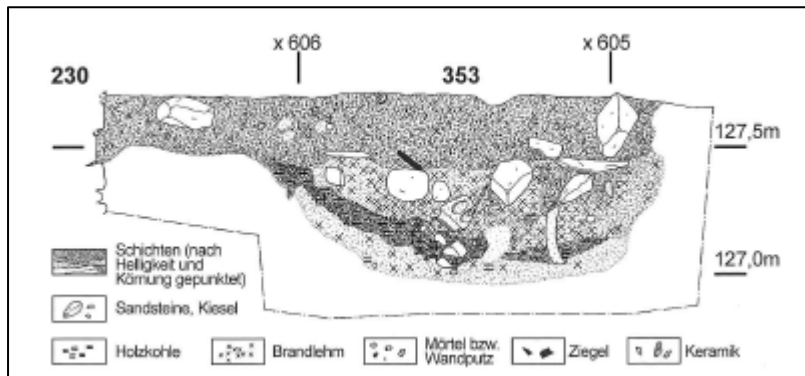


Figure 3. 1: Section of pit, which provided the *terminus post quem* for the construction of the bath building.

Scale 1:25 (after Jae 2000, 136, *Abb. 11*)

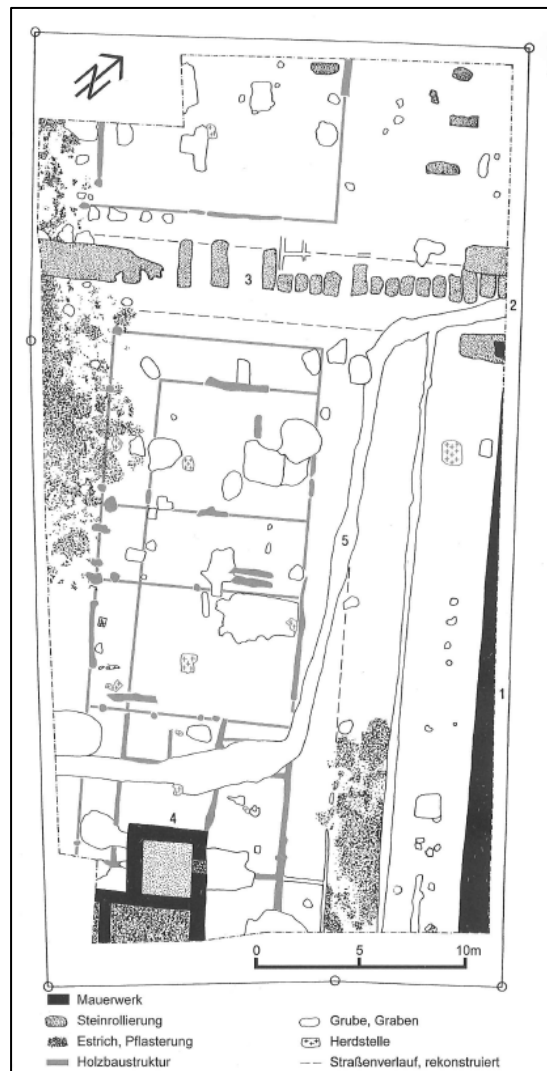


Figure 3. 2: Plan of excavation of Miltenberg-Ost. Nr. 3 represents the fortification wall, while nr. 4 represents the bath house and nr. 5 represents the wastewater channel (after Jae 2000, 105, *Abb. 2*)

The sequence was dated to the mid-third century based on the presence of Urmitzer Ware as well as later forms of Bernhard group IIIa Rheinzabern vessels (Jae 2000, 145-146). While

the evidence from this excavation is enticing and would imply a complete change in layout of the fort, it is important to note that only a section of the east central range of the fort was excavated, leaving much of the site unexamined (*fig 3.3*). Therefore, it is difficult to say with any confidence whether the entire fort suffered from a fire or if it was concentrated to a single area. Moreover, the bath house and fortification wall were only partially excavated, and it would thus be difficult to state the full extent of these structures with any confidence. Thus, while the implications of the sequence at Miltenberg-Ost are tempting, the partial excavation means caution should be taken before making broad conclusions. Further, evidence for a bath house is devised from the excavation of only one complete room. Without more precise dating evidence, the term ‘mid-third century’ which spans a period of such historical change, is no further refined.

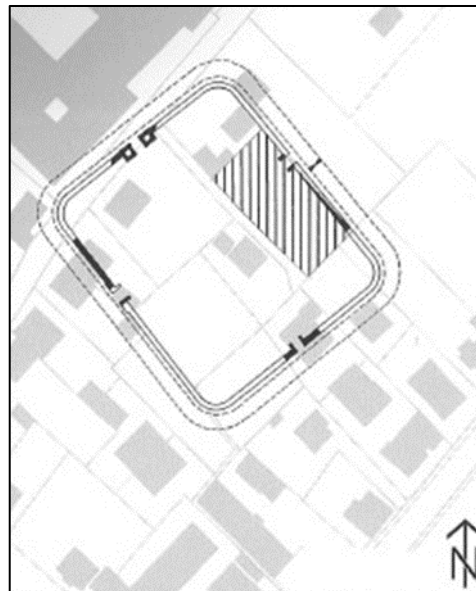


Figure 3. 3: Plan showing the excavated area of the fort at Miltenberg-Ost. Image not to scale (after Jae 2000, 104, *Abb. 1*)

The second case study is the auxiliary fort at Buciumi in Northwestern Transylvania. The fort is one of the most extensively excavated sites in the region and was the focus of investigation from 1963-1976, but non-stratigraphic excavation has meant that much of the nuanced data has been lost (Petruț 2015, 339). However, the illustration of excavations show the typical method of excavation in the region (*fig. 3.4*), where 1m sondage trenches are laid in order to find larger structures, which are then either partially or fully excavated. Without open area excavation, most of the nuanced data is lost. New construction onto the *praetorium* over the *via sagularis* was dated by the excavators due to the presence of an unidentified antoninianus in room b of the building (Gudea 1997b, 58). At best this provided a *terminus ante quem* for occupation layers, but by the admission of the excavators, the latest *terminus post quem* for this construction was dated to 220 at the latest based on the finds assemblage (Gudea 1997b,

61). A wall held together with clay bonding was found in between rooms R and S of the *praetorium*, but it was unclear how late this wall dated (Chirilă et al. 1972, 122-123). Furthermore, findspots for artefacts are not known, with much of the assemblage being assigned to an area of the fort or specific building, limiting the amount of information one can obtain from the assemblage (Petruț 2015, 339).

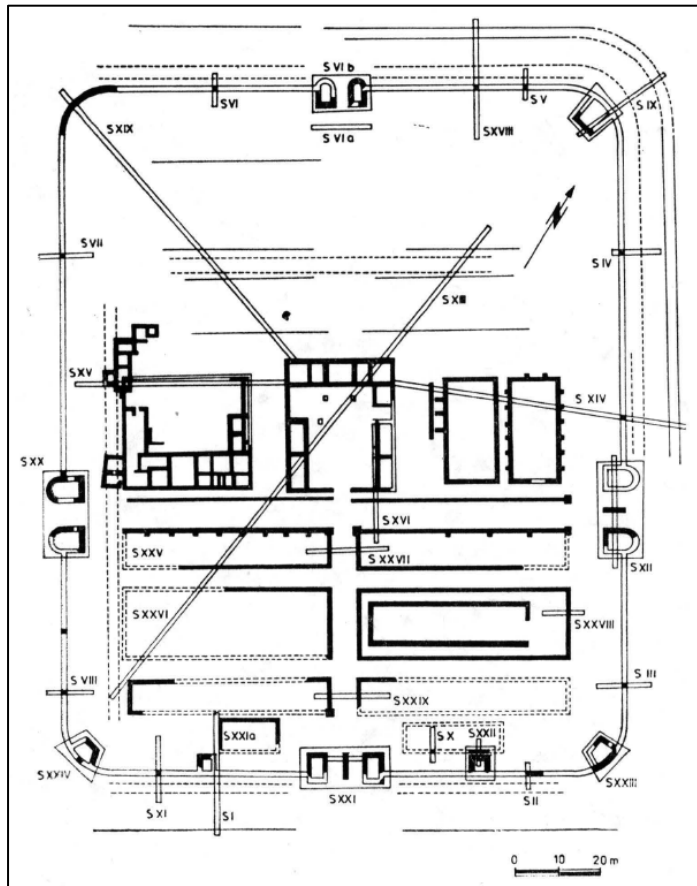


Figure 3. 4: Plan showing the excavated area of the fort at Buciumi showing excavation in narrow trenches to locate larger structures. Note construction off of the *praetorium* over the *via sagularis* (after Gyemant and Gudea 1984, 188, fig. 3.5)

The fort is also unique in that it is one of only four in the region at which evidence for burning layers were found, primarily in the *porta principalis sinistra* (Chirilă et al. 1972, 17; fig. 3.5) and in the barracks range, underneath tile scatter (Gudea 1997b, 61). Though Gudea (1997b, 61) notes that these two ranges were where fire was identified, he states that the entire installation was burnt down intentionally by the garrison before it left. However, like Miltenberg-Ost, with large areas of the fort left unexcavated, it is impossible to state the level of destruction with confidence. Though Gudea (1997b, 61) states that ‘late’ Samian vessels, as well as an antoninianus of Trebonianus Gallus and a proto-crossbow brooch were found in the debris, there can be little that can be said with confidence in the final interpretation.

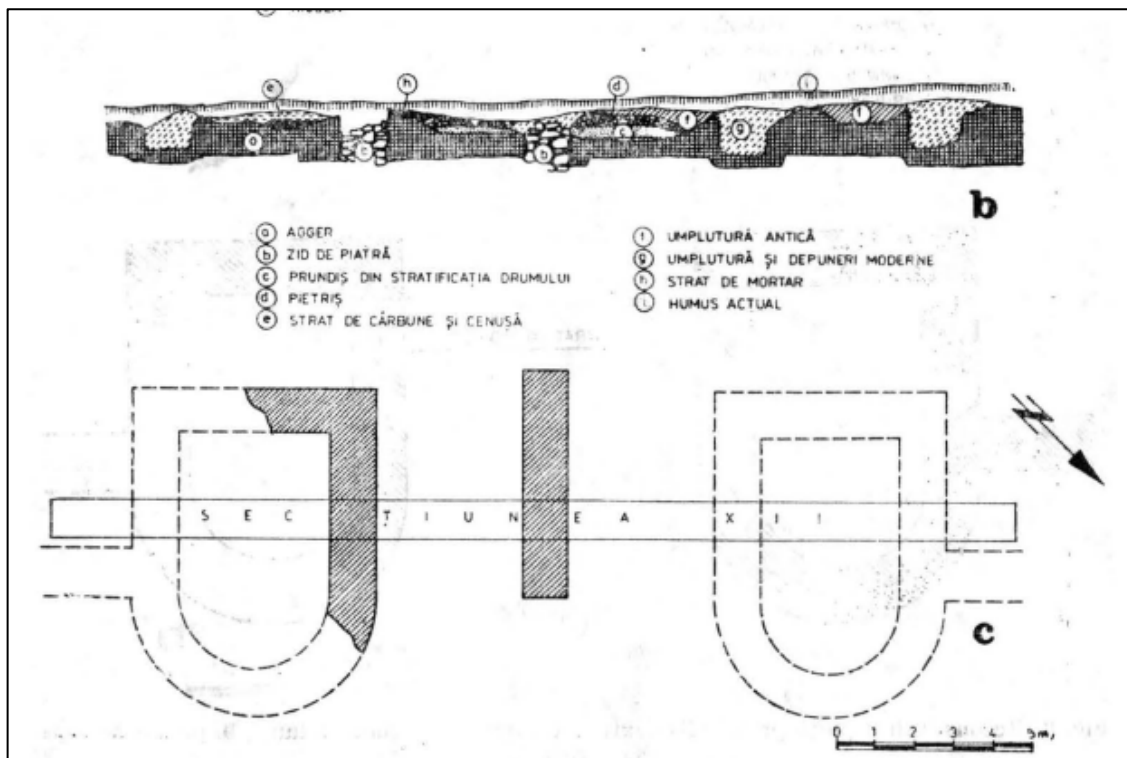


Figure 3. 5: Section of the *porta principalis sinistra* at Buciumi. 'e' represents the burning later (after Gyemant and Gudea 1984, 193, fig. 7)

Both of these case studies demonstrate the issues that arise when interpretation comes from excavations that covers limited site areas. While this may be unavoidable, especially in the case of rescue excavations, caution should still be taken when interpreting the entire narrative for a site based on a small section of excavation. Furthermore, though large areas of the fort at Buciumi were excavated, they were done so in a method in which direct relationships between structures would not be perceptible. Therefore, further caution should be taken in the interpretation of a site with similar issues.

3.7 Building a methodological framework

After working through the scope and limitations of the source material, two critical issues are apparent with the regional assemblages. First is an issue of dating; in Southwest Germany, circular argumentation and historical dating have affected the interpretation of the archaeological record while in Transylvania the nascent stages of finds research means that there is little confidence in dating material outside of a general second-third century 'Roman' date. Coins and inscriptions may partially escape these problems, but the effect on the interpretation of site archives necessitates that it is critical to examine the site data in order to see how the archaeological evidence aligns with established narratives from both regions. Second is the issue of site excavation and publication. In Southwest Germany, much of the data used in the narrative comes from sites excavated before the development of modern techniques. While the material from a small number of these has been reworked, the majority

are still assessed based on the information from the initial excavation. In Transylvania, keyhole and non-stratigraphic excavation combined with sporadic and limited publication has meant that much of the site data is unreliable.

Moreover, examination of the regional numismatic and epigraphic assemblages allows for further testing of the narrative as well as cross-regional comparison. The period from the reign of Gordian III to Aurelian (238-275) is the general basis for study; it spans the final decades and Roman abandonment of both regions, as well as allows for comparison along established lines of numismatic study.

3.7.1 Site methodology

In order to see if different site types exhibited different patterns, sites were separated into three categories; military, which included legionary fortresses, auxiliary forts, and extramural settlements; towns, which included small towns as well as larger *civitas* capitals, *municipia*, and *colonia*; and rural, which consisted of *villa* sites.

Though much of the nuanced data needed for complex analysis is lacking from Transylvanian site reports, a system needed to be established in order to treat the evidence from each region the same. Thus, while the analysis of the material on a site by site basis is complex, the methodology for analysing the overall data is simple. This was due to the necessity to work through the published information in a dataset of 146 published sites across both regions.

At the base level, data was separated into three classes of information based on the scope and limitations stated above in sections 3.2-3.6. The first, dating evidence, was based on the scope and limitations of ceramic, numismatic, and epigraphic material.

Second, structural activity, was based on the evidence for construction and demolition. While evidence of construction is perhaps the most identifiable form of structural activity, demolition is more nuanced, but just as crucial. Gerrard (2013, 161) and Barker (2010) have noted the importance of identifying intentional demolition. Gerrard (2013, 161) argues that buildings will stand as ruins for decades if not centuries, noting the examples of the roof-height walls of the bath house at Ravenglass in Cumbria, and the presence of high medieval ceramics in the roof collapse of a temple at Pagan's Hill in Somerset. Furthermore, Reis (2010, 271-274) has noted that the backfilling of cellars and the levelling of structures is in many cases the latest evidence of activity in Roman phases at sites in Southwest Germany, hinting at further activity.

Third, documenting burning layers is very important. There is little evidence for destruction by fire in Transylvania, it occurs at only eight out of 55 sites, but it is the most common

feature visible in Southwest Germany, appearing at 42 out of 91 sites, mainly occurring at military sites. In the last two decades, the interpretation of burning layers has persisted as evidence for Germanic destruction (Reuter 2007; Schallmayer 2018, 323; Czysz and Faber 2005, 139). Other factors, namely intentional destruction by the inhabitants of a military installation to deprive its use by hostile forces, such as at the legionary fortress at Inchtuthil (Pitts and St Joseph 1985, 52-53), or possible accidental fire, as may have been the case in the period 9B barracks in the fort at South Shields (Bidwell and Speak 1994, 32-33; Murley 2005, 82-83 *contra* Hodgson 2005), are typically not considered. Further, it is worth examining the validity of associating human remains and the presence of weapons with destruction deposits as the location of these remains in the archaeological record is not uniform and is not necessarily a positive indicator of barbarian raiding (Fischer 2013).

Finally, though not an indicator of structural activity, the presence of either numismatic or material hoards is also important to examine, as they play heavily into the narratives for both regions. In many cases, hoards associated with sites were not found in excavation such as Guzenhausen (Kellner 1953) and Kösching (Reinecke 1934), isolated finds that do not come from larger excavations, such as the ‘temple hoard’ from Weißenburg (Kellner and Zahlhaas 1993), or ultimately lost after excavation, such as Alba Iulia II and III (Cserni 1903; 1908). Moreover, given the simplistic interpretation of hoards in both regions as stated in section 3.4, the importance of checking associated hoards against corresponding site records is paramount in testing regional narratives.

An Access database was created in order to document and catalogue the evidence for these indicators at each site, which could then be queried (*fig. 3.6*).

Site Name	<input type="text"/>		
Dated Phasing	<input type="text"/>	Latest Coin Date	<input type="text"/>
Ceramic Dating	<input type="text"/>	Latest Epig Date	<input type="text"/>
Finds Dating	<input type="text"/>	Latest Sci Date	<input type="text"/>
Hoarding	<input type="text"/>	Site Demolition	<input type="text"/>
Site Construction	<input type="text"/>	Traces of Burning	<input type="text"/>
		Human Remains	<input type="text"/>
		Weapons	<input type="text"/>

Figure 3. 6: Template for site database

Entries on a site-by-site basis were then made with the following categories, based on the parameters above:

Site Name

Dating criteria: The following six entries assessed the evidence for dating of site activity in the mid-third century.

Dated Phasing: This allowed to examine which sites were given dated phasing by their excavators based on stratigraphic excavation.

Ceramic Dating: The ceramic dating based on the conclusions of the excavator. This data was unavailable for 28 of the 91 sites in Southwest Germany and 28 of the 55 sites in Transylvania.

Finds Dating: Any additional finds dating that showed mid-third century activity. In almost every case, this was not helpful in establishing evidence for activity due to the wide date range of finds.

Latest Coin Date: The latest applicable coin date in the survey period from a site. Thirty-five out of 91 sites in Southwest Germany and 23 out of 55 in Transylvania provided no data.

Latest Epigraphic Date: The latest applicable epigraphic date in the survey period from a site. Seventy-six out of 91 sites in Southwest Germany and 38 of the 55 sites in Transylvania had no applicable data.

Latest Scientific Date: The latest scientific date in the survey period from a site. This was strictly dendrochronological and was only applicable at three sites, all in Southwest Germany.

Structural Activity:

Site Construction: Evidence of construction and/or repair. In the case of Southwest Germany, the construction of town walls, partially associated with the mid-third century in the region, were added. In both regions, the blocking of fort gates at military sites was also documented.

Site Demolition: Evidence of the backfilling or levelling of features in site reports. Due to the necessity of stratigraphic excavation data, this was largely missing from Transylvania, with only five out of 55 sites displaying evidence. In the case of Southwest Germany, the backfill of wells was also documented.

Destruction: The following three categories assessed the evidence for destruction. As the evidence for destruction was largely centred in Southwest Germany, these categories were included to look at the evidence as it supports the narrative.

Traces of Burning: Evidence of burning layers, either in isolated areas or across the entire excavated area of the site.

Human Remains: Evidence of human remains, with or without visible trauma, associated with destruction deposits and/or burning layers.

Weapons: The presence of weapons associated with the destruction deposits and/or burning layers.

Hoarding: Evidence for numismatic or material hoards or both were noted. The Transylvanian data only provided evidence for numismatic hoards.

Data was collected from each published site and entered into the databases, which are collected in Appendices A and D, separated by site type. Due to the higher quantity of published data in Southwest Germany, it was possible to examine auxiliary forts and their extramural settlements differently in eighteen different instances. The level of excavation and recording in Transylvania meant that this was not possible.

Access queries were then run on the data from each site type to assess the strength of dating criteria. Once the level of confidence in dating evidence was established, individual queries into each type of site activity were run. This was executed in order to assess the validity of activity as it fit into the established narrative. The results were then mapped in ArcGIS in order to establish if any regional patterns outside of established narratives were present. Due to the higher resolution of site data in Southwest Germany it was possible to manipulate the data in more nuanced fashions and investigate specific types of activity, such as the presence of human remains (Gerrard *forthcoming*), the evidence for closing rituals (Heising 2013), and the deposition of Jupiter Columns in wells fills as an act associated with the end of Roman administration in the region (Noelke 2006; Konrad 2015). Synthesis of the data from Southwest Germany is given in section 10.2 and for Transylvania in section 10.3.

3.7.2 Numismatic methodology

The numismatic methodology of the thesis largely builds off of established practices in comparison developed by Richard Reece, in order to study patterns of coin loss. Coin loss is a process by which coins accrue in the archaeological record; as one would assume that coins were not intentionally discarded, coinage accumulates when it is 'lost' by the owner. The rate at which coinage is lost is directly proportional to the volume of coinage issued, the value of said coinage, political and economic factors prevailing at the time, and in many cases to the physical size of individual coins in the original coin population (Casey 1986, 62-63). In order to measure coin loss, two prevailing methods were established; Reece's (2002, 13-36) 21 emission periods, which follow general trends in minting of coinage in the Roman Empire and Casey's (1986, 90) 27 period chart, which follows more along the reign of emperors. The decision was made to use Reece's periods, as this has become the standard in most numismatic studies in Britain (Walton 2012, 12) (*tab 3.5*). Using this method of aggregation also allows for the inclusion of coins that can only be partially identified (Walton 2012, 12). Reece's method uses a *per mill* value, where the total coins in a period are divided by the total coins in the assemblage and then multiplied by 1000 in order to account for error caused by the decimal point in percentages (Reece 1987, 76; Walton 2012). The result is a value that

can be compared across site assemblages. *Per mill* aggregation does have its methodological drawbacks; Lockyear (2007, 217) has noted the problem of ‘closure’, whereby the values for a period are influenced by totals in earlier and later periods in the assemblage.

Reece’s methodology has not only been used to compare site finds but was eventually utilized to establish a mean for coin loss across Roman Britain. This initially began with a comparison of fourteen sites (Reece 1972, 273) before incorporating 88 sites (Reece 1987, 82), and finally culminating in the aggregation of 140 sites (Reece 1991) in order to establish a ‘British mean’ of coin loss (Reece 1995, 183). Though the methodology established a mean across site finds, stray finds were largely unaccounted for. Thus, Walton (2012), using datasets from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in England and Wales, was able to develop an updated comparative mean combining PAS data with Reece’s earlier British mean (fig 3.7).

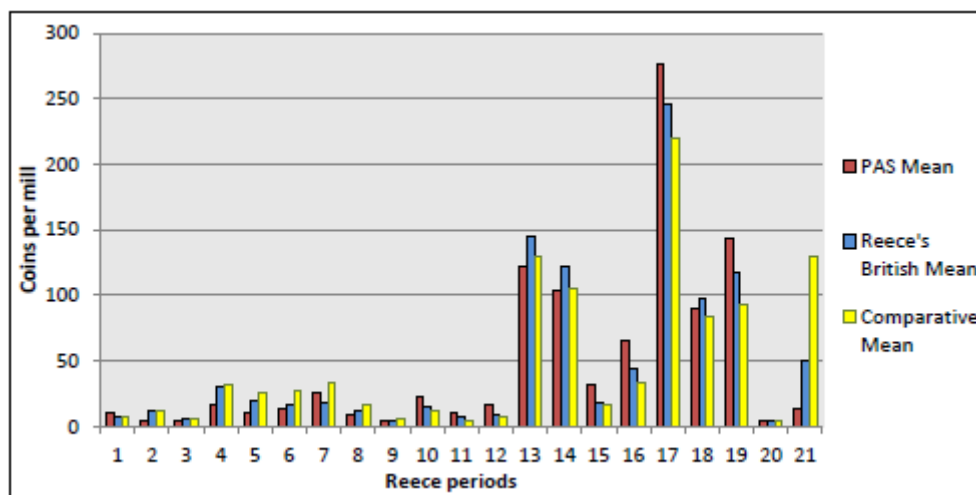


Figure 3. 7: PAS mean, Reece’s British mean, and the comparative mean developed by Walton (2012) (after Walton 2012, 35, fig. 13)

Reece (1991) also developed means of coin loss across urban, rural, villa, military, and temple sites, which Walton (2012, 33) was able to update as well. In addition to plotting coin loss, Reece (1995) also developed a technique using cumulative frequency analysis, which allowed for a cumulative coin profile to be plotted against the larger mean on a single graph. Walton (2012, 15-16), following from Lockyear (2000), employed the use of cluster and correspondence analyses to interpret the PAS data in order to plot the location of possible settlements.

Reece Period	Date Range (AD)	Description
I	Republic-43	Republic-Augustan/Early Julio-Claudian
II	43-54	Claudian
III	54-68	Neronian
IV	69-96	Flavian dynasty
V	96-117	Nerva/Trajanic
VI	117-138	Hadrianic
VII	138-161	Early Antonine
VIII	161-180	Marcus Aurelius/Lucius Verus
IX	180-192	Commodus
X	193-222	Early Severan
XI	222-238	Late Severan
XII	238-259/260	Gordian III-Valerian/Gallienus joint reign
XIII	259/260-275	Gallienus sole reign-Aurelian
XIV	275-296	Tacitus-Allectus
XV	296-317	Tetrarchy
XVI	317-330	Constantinian I
XVII	330-348	Constantinian II
XVIII	348-364	Constantinian III
XIX	264-378	Valentinianic
XX	378-388	Theodosian I
XXI	388-402	Theodosian II

Table 3. 5: Numismatic emission ‘Reece periods’. Periods XII (238-259/260) and XIII (259/260-275), which cover the survey period, are highlighted in grey

Parts of the methodology developed by Reece and Walton are employed in this study in order to build site type comparison on a regional level, set against a regional mean, which are then able to be compared side by side on an inter-regional level. The majority of data was mined from the FMRD volumes for Southwest Germany and from numismatic site monographs and Petac’s (2011) catalogue of Roman coin finds from Roman *Dacia*. The aims of aggregating the data were to look for differences between site types on a regional level, and for regional patterns on an inter-regional level. Further, with 425 sites with site finds identified in Southwest Germany (Appendix B.1) alone, in addition to the 115 sites from Transylvania (Appendix E.1) meant that site-by-site comparison was beyond the scope of the thesis. Moreover, a simplified version of site categories was necessary.⁴⁸ Thus, sites were divided by military, town, and rural, with the additional category for stray finds. Military site finds were further split between fort and extramural for independent analysis where possible, though in comparison with the larger assemblage, both were combined into the military category.

⁴⁸ The total coinage for Southwest Germany included 34,688 coins, with 9412 coins coming from 21 towns, 13,138 coins coming from 138 military sites, 1524 coins coming from 221 rural sites, 167 coins coming from 45 ‘residual’ contexts, consisting of coin finds in later migration period and medieval graves, and 8853 stray coin finds. For the total assemblage equalled 10,488 coins, with 3530 coins coming from nine towns, 3281 coins coming from 39 military sites, 353 coins coming from 67 rural sites, and 3324 stray coins finds.

Coinage from excavated rural sites was expectedly low. In order to supplement this, any listings in FMRD that noted the remains of a *villa*, settlement, or homestead were added to the list of rural site finds, while in Transylvania, finds from Petac's (2011) catalogue were correlated with Popa's (2002) gazetteer of rural sites from Transylvania. Utilizing this method to identify coinage for rural sites can create a potential bias where the rural assemblage may be overrepresented from stray finds, but it was deemed necessary in order to have a rural assemblage to compare. Further bias in the overall assemblage can come between Reece periods XII (238-259/260) and XIII (259/260-275) which are consequently the two periods that are the focus of this thesis. The joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (253-260) and the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268) straddle this divide, but there is sometimes difficulty in identifying whether some coins of Gallienus belong in period XII or period XIII. One hundred fifty-four coins from Southwest Germany are dated 253-268 while only eighteen were identified in the assemblage from Transylvania. Erring on the side of caution, these coins were included in period XII.

Once all the data was collected, coins of each site type were then separated by Reece period and *per mill* totals calculated for each site type. The entire assemblage was then calculated in the same way in order to establish regional means. This data was then used to compare the general trends of coin loss across site types in each region in sections 6.2.2-6.2.3 in Southwest Germany and 9.2.2-9.2.3 in Transylvania. Ideally, collating these assemblages and aggregating the data will allow further study of coin circulation in an inter-regional context beyond this thesis.

Although formatting the entire regional assemblages was necessary to look at the relative patterns of coin loss in periods XII and XIII, the period assemblage needed to be examined more in-depth. Therefore, the individual coin identifications for periods XII and XIII were recorded (Appendix B.2 and Appendix E.2). Period XII and XIII issues included 1987 coins from Southwest Germany and 1066 coins from Transylvania.⁴⁹ In order to inspect the assemblages more closely, eight regnal periods were created based on the reign of Central and Gallic emperors (*tab 3.6*). Coins were then separated into these periods and again aggregated with *per mill* totals in order to look across site types. This also carries the inherent bias of 'closure' (Lockyear 2007, 217), but was deemed to be the most effective way to examine period coinage. In addition to looking at trends of basic circulation across site types via regnal periods, coins were also aggregated by metal content and origin. In the case of

⁴⁹ Southwest Germany totals included 434 coins from towns, 430 from military sites, 118 from rural sites, and 1005 stray coins. Transylvania totals included 385 coins from towns, 264 from military sites, 24 from rural sites, and 393 stray coins.

Southwest Germany, origin was considered between coins emanating from the Central Empire and the Gallic Empire in order to see which issues were more successful at penetrating the regions. In the case of Transylvania, origin was considered between the regional *PROVINCIA DACIA* mint and the nearby mint at *Viminacium* and coinage from elsewhere in the Empire. This was done in order to test theories of the effects of the Carpic Wars on regional coin supply. The results of these analyses are given in sections 6.2.3 for Southwest Germany and 9.2.3 for Transylvania.

Regnal period	Central emperor	Gallic emperor
238-244	Gordian III	
244-249	Philip the Arab	
	Philip II	
249-251	Trajan Decius	
	Herennius Etruscus	
251-253	Trebonianus Gallus	
	Hostilian	
	Volusian	
253-260	Aemelian	
	Valerian/Gallienus Joint reign	
260-268	Gallienus	Postumus
	Saloninus	
268-270	Claudius II	Marius
		Victorinus
	Quintillus	
270-275	Aurelian	
		Tetricus I

Table 3. 6: Reece periods XII and XIII divided into ‘regnal periods’ covering the reigns of mid-third century Central and Gallic emperors.

Numismatic hoards were also examined in each region, though this was not for analysis of hoard contents of comparative analysis. Instead, hoards were examined across the region in the scope of the knowledge of their context of deposition, their recovery, and their contents. The aim of this was to test their suitability for use in building the narratives in each region. Data was collected from FMRD volumes for Southwest Germany and from Depeyrot and Moisil’s (2008) catalogue of coin hoards dated 238-275 from Romania and supplemented where needed. Hoards were then entered into an Access database so simple queries could be made (*fig. 3.8*). Entries into the database were made under the following parameters:

Hoard Name: The common name of the hoard

Closing Emperor: The emperor under whose coinage the hoard closes

Opening Date: The opening date of the hoard given available information

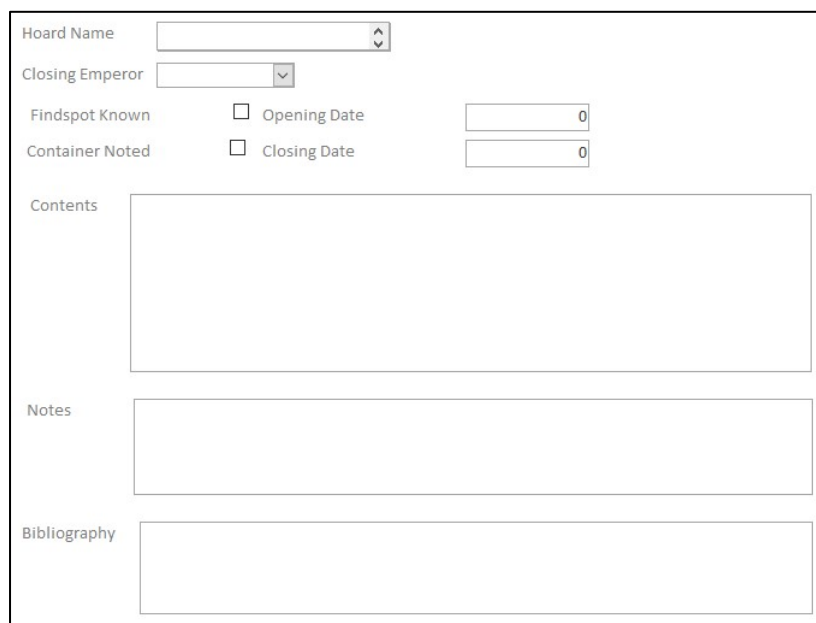
Closing Date: The closing date of the hoard given available information

Findspot known: Added to help in assessing the validity of the hoard as evidence

Container noted: Mention of any container, for example a clay or metal vessel, remains of a wooden box, or a cloth or leather bag

Contents: The contents of the hoard, including the mention of any unidentified coins

Notes: Any additional notes on the hoard; whether it was found in excavation, if it is currently lost, or if any of the coins were unidentified.



The form contains the following elements:

- Hoard Name: A dropdown menu.
- Closing Emperor: A dropdown menu.
- Findspot Known: A checkbox.
- Opening Date: A text input field containing the number 0.
- Container Noted: A checkbox.
- Closing Date: A text input field containing the number 0.
- Contents: A large text input area.
- Notes: A large text input area.
- Bibliography: A large text input area.

Figure 3. 8: Template for hoard database

Queries were used to identify the quantity of hoards without full identification, a known findspot, their current status, and whether they were found in excavation. The results were then collated into tables and compared against their usage in existing narratives for each region. The results of these analyses are given in sections 6.2.4 for Southwest Germany and 9.2.4 for Transylvania.

3.7.3 Epigraphic methodology

The final part of the methodological framework consisted of examining general trends in the epigraphic assemblages of each region and then the specific mid-third century assemblages. Data for both regions was initially gathered from the Heidelberg University Epigraphic Database (<https://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/home>; accessed 1/2019). Inscriptions not included in the online database were collected from *CIL XIII* for the *Germania Superior* sector of Southwest Germany, from *IDR* and *CIL III* for Transylvania, and *L'Anée Epigraphique* for both regions. A total of 1302 inscriptions were identified in Southwest Germany and 1805 in Transylvania. Due to the large number of inscriptions, interpretation

of dating was taken at face value from previous scholars. Most inscriptions from both regions were only datable to the Roman period, with 733 examples from Southwest Germany and 1410 examples from Transylvania. Next, inscriptions datable to a century were collated, with 231 from Southwest Germany and 83 from Transylvania. The final group consisted of inscriptions that were able to be dated more accurately, sometimes to a particular date and sometimes to the date range of a particular dynasty. These consisted of 244 inscriptions in Southwest Germany and 312 in Transylvania. The inscriptions dated to a dynastic period were then separated based on dynastic periods during the Principate with the emperors of the mid-third century combined as one dynasty (*tab. 3.7*). Inscriptions of Maximinus Thrax were included in the mid-third century dynasty as otherwise these inscriptions would have stood as an outlier between the Severan dynasty and mid-third century emperors.

Dynasty	Emperor	Date Range	Dynasty	Emperor	Date Range
Julio-Claudian		37BC-AD68	Severan		192-235
	Augustus	27BC-AD14		Year of the five emperors	193
	Tiberius	14-37		Septimius Severus	193-211
	Caligula	37-41		Caracalla	211-217
	Claudius	41-54		Geta	211
	Nero	54-68		Macrinus	217-218
	Year of four emperors	68-69		Elagabalus	218-222
Flavian		69-96		Severus Alexander	222-235
	Vespasian	69-79	Mid-third c.		235-275
	Titus	79-81		Maximinus Thrax	235-238
	Domitian	91-96		Gordian I and II	238
Trajanic-Hadrianic		96-138		Pupienus and Balbinus	238
	Nerva	96-98		Gordian III	238-244
	Trajan	98-117		Philip the Arab	244-249
	Hadrian	117-138		Trajan Decius	249-251
Antonine		138-192		Trebonianus Gallus	251-253
	Antoninus Pius	138-161		Aemelian	253
	Lucius Verus	161-169		Valerian and Gallienus	253-260
	Marcus Aurelius	161-180		Gallienus	260-268
	Commodus	180-192			

Table 3. 7: Dynastic periods used for quantifying inscriptions

After separating the inscriptions chronologically, they were divided into different classes which consisted of milestones and then civilian and military contexts. Inscriptions were assigned military contexts if they mentioned a military unit or soldier and a civilian context if they did not. Inscription from both contexts were then divided into funerary, votive, building, and dedicatory inscriptions. Inscriptions were deemed ‘votive’ if they were an altar, dedicated to a deity or included the fulfilment of a vow, ‘building’ if they mentioned the construction or the restoration of a building, and ‘dedicatory’ if they were a statue base dedicated to an emperor. Overlap can occur in the classification of inscriptions, such as the votive inscriptions that also commemorated the construction of temples in the towns of Turda-*Potaissa* (CIL III 875=ILS 4345) and Moigrad-*Porolissum* (AE 2001, 1707=AE 2006, 1125=ILD 683). Once all the inscriptions had been dated and assigned, the data was collated

into an Excel database and histograms were created mapping basic trends across General Roman inscriptions, inscriptions dated to a century, and inscriptions dated to a dynasty. This allowed observation as to whether the general regional trends followed similar patterns of the Western Empire noted by Mrozek (1973) and MacMullen (1982; *fig. 3.9*).

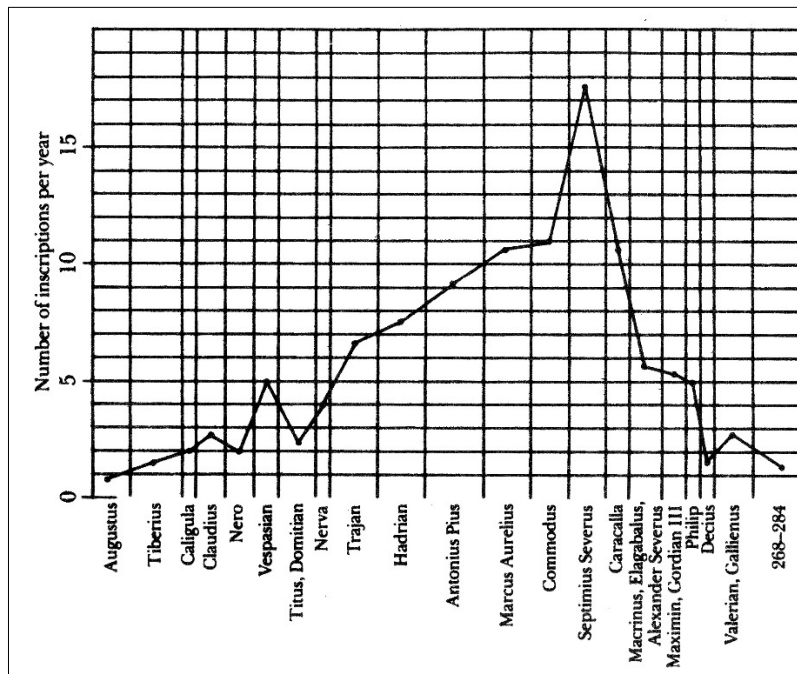


Figure 3.9 Frequency of datable inscriptions in the Western Empire (after MacMullen 1982, 243, *fig. 5*)

In-depth analysis of mid-third century inscriptions was undertaken by entering each inscription into an Access database (*fig. 3.10*). This included 38 inscriptions from Southwest Germany and 70 inscriptions from Transylvania. In most cases, established date ranged was followed, though exceptions were made in the case of the re-dating of the inscription from Hausen ob Lonthal (CIL III 5933=IBR 202) by Eck (2012, 82-83) to the sole reign of Gallienus and the re-dating of two altars from the intramural bath house from the fortress at Turda-*Potaissa* (Bărbulescu 2012, 189-191; AE 2012, 1215-1216) to the reign of Aemelian/the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (Piso 2014, 128).

Site Name/Location

Findspot Known? Inscription ID

Found in Excavation

Inscription Type Date of Inscription Reused?

Text

Notes

Bibliography

Figure 3. 10: Template for epigraphic database

Entries for the database included:

Site name/Location: The location that the inscription is associated with

Inscription ID: The relevant ids for the inscription based on what catalogues it appears in

Findspot known: Whether or not the actual findspot of the inscription is known

Found in excavation: If the inscription was found in excavation; a continuation of findspot known

Inscription Type: Civilian or military funerary, votive, building, or dedicatory, or milestone

Date of inscription: Either the date of the inscription, or a general date range if not known

Reused: Whether or not the inscription was reused in Antiquity

Text: The text of the inscription based on the interpretation of previous scholars

Notes: Any specific notes relevant to the inscription

Simple queries were then run on the Access database which allowed the collation of each regional epigraphic assemblage into charts. This allowed for each assemblage to be assessed against its regional narratives. The results of these analyses are in section 6.4 for Southwest Germany and 9.4 for Transylvania.

3.8 Conclusions

This chapter has worked through both the source material for the study and the methodological framework from which it is conducted. The scope and limitations of third century material in general and the regional datasets of Southwest Germany and Transylvania in particular were established. After these parameters were set, a methodology in order to test the validity of regional narratives was established, primarily utilizing archaeological site data. This is examined alongside regional numismatic and epigraphic assemblages, which have

historically been used to set narratives. The results of the analyses of these datasets are the focus of Part Two for Southwest Germany and Part Three for Transylvania. Though the two datasets vary greatly, it is important to treat them in the same manner in order to achieve comparable results. This allows comparison of the regional datasets, the results of which are the focus of Chapter Ten in Part Four of the thesis.

Part Two: Southwest Germany

4. Military Sites in Southwest Germany

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins the data survey of the thesis, for Southwest Germany in Part Two and Transylvania in Part Three. Military sites are the most heavily researched sites in the region, and demonstrated in Part One, are responsible for the majority of data from which the regional narrative is constructed. Though much of the data is over a century old, reworking of the material from older excavations and a few modern research projects have begun the process of updating the state of knowledge at military sites.

In order to see if there were different processes at work between the fort itself and the extramural settlement, each was investigated separately. Though in other areas, such as in Hadrian's Wall, the mid-late third century marks a period where extramural settlements are abandoned, large-scale activity at military sites ended in Southwest Germany before this transition could occur. Historically, extramural settlements have been overlooked in their entirety or have been viewed solely as an appendage to the fort itself. Recent research has argued that extramural settlements, though intrinsically linked with the associated forts, were sites with complex layers of activity (Birley 2016; Greene 2013; Allison 2007; 2013). Further, recent German scholarship has come to view the extramural settlement as a unique site type, though still linked to the fort (Sommer 1984; 1988; 1991; 1999; 2006).

There are perhaps two striking omissions to the discussion. First is the fort and/or town at Heidelberg-Neuenheim. There is remaining doubt as to whether a fort existed at the site in the mid-third century, or if there was solely a town at the site in the third century (Schönburger 1985, 453). A lack of published excavation of the site makes it difficult to interpret the information.⁵⁰ Second is the extramural settlement at Langenhain on the *limes* in the Wetterau region. This is due to the only published information being a ceramic depot from a cellar in the extramural settlement dated prior to 233 (Simon and Kohler 1992).⁵¹

After working through the material, it will become apparent that the narrative of *Limesfall* is no longer applicable based on the evidence, as the ambiguity of destruction deposits and the

⁵⁰ A monograph of known ceramics does exist, though it is largely focused on grave goods (Heukemes 1964). Although it is almost sixty years old, there was little evidence from the known ceramics at the time to suggest an assemblage spanning past 233. However, numismatic and epigraphic evidence known from the site (covered in sections 4.3 and 4.4) would seem to confirm mid-third century occupation. In recent times, a fuller assessment of the cemetery at Heidelberg-Neuenheim has been produced (Hensen 2009).

⁵¹ Langenhain has become an important site in the discussion of early third century ceramics due to the discovery of the depot in a fire-destroyed cellar in the extramural settlement that Simon and Köhler (1992, 82-83) associated with the Alemannic raids of 233. This was due to the final coin in the sequence being a denarius of Severus Alexander from 226. Much of the excavation unfortunately remains unpublished.

lack of widespread violence makes this theory untenable. Furthermore, destruction of the Raetian sector of the frontier in the Spring of 254 by Germanic raiders (Reuter 2007) is an enticing interpretation, and the absence of coin finds after this period along the Raetian *limes* could lead to this conclusion. However, it is difficult to ascribe such specific parameters to the archaeological record. What is seen is a pragmatic shift in the modification and use of space across the region, which indicates a pragmatic shift that took place over a period of decades from the late 230s into the late 250s and perhaps beyond.

4.2 Forts in the mid-third century

There is a total of 56 forts in the survey region that meet the criteria for showing mid-third century activity. All of these sites fall either on the *Germania Superior-Raetia limes* or within the immediate hinterland. In keeping with the tradition set forward by the *ORL* and later reinforced by Schönburger (1985), forts are referred to in a west to east fashion for sake of management.

Out of the 56 forts in the study, 28 have coin dates and 25 have a ceramic dating that fits into the survey period. Of these, nineteen sites overlap (*fig. 4.1*). Nine sites have associated epigraphic material that explicitly dates to within the survey period. As discussed in section 3.2.2, ceramic dating for the third century in Southwest Germany is typically based on the quantity of Bernhard Group IIIa or IIIb Rheinzabern in the assemblage. However, in some cases it is separated by first or second half of the century as well. These distinctions are largely at the mercy of whoever is responsible for writing the final report.

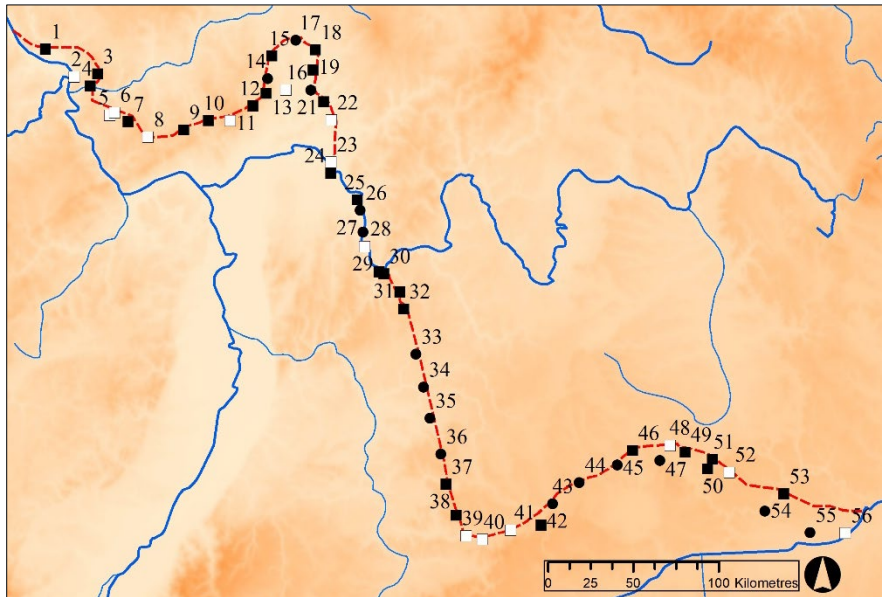


Figure 4. 1: Datable material from fort sites in Southwest Germany. Key: Black square – Sites with datable ceramic material; Black circle – Sites with datable numismatic material White square: Sites with no datable material

1. Niederbieber 2. Niederberg 3. Arzbach 4. Bad Ems 5. Marienfels 6. Hunzel 7. Holzhausen 8. Kemel 9. Zugmantel 10. Heftrich 11. Kleiner Feldberg 12. Saalburg 13. Kapersburg 14. Langenhain 15. Butzbach 16. Friedberg 17. Arnsburg 18. Inheiden 19. Echzell 20. Ober-Florstadt 21. Altenstadt 22. Marköbel 23. Großkrotzenburg 24. Seligenstadt 25. Stockstadt am Main 26. Nidernberg 27. Oberrburg am Main 28. Wörth 29. Miltenburg-Altstadt 30. Miltenburg-Ost 31. Haselburg 32. Walldürn 33. Osterburken 34. Jagsthausen 35. Öhringen 36. Mainhardt 37. Murrhardt 38. Welzheim 39. Lorch 40. Schirenhof 41. Unterböbingen 42. Aalen 43. Rainau-Buch 44. Halheim 45. Ruffenhofen 46. Dambach 47. Gnotzheim 48. Gunzenhausen 49. Theilenhofen 50. Weißenburg 51. Ellingen 52. Burgsalach 53. Böhming 54. Pfünz 55. Kösching 56. Pförring

4.2.1 Forts with ceramic dating to the first half of the third century

Six sites with datable ceramics assemblages with an end date in the first half of the third century fell within the survey data. Four are in *Germania Superior*, Niederbieber, Bad Ems, Butzbach and Echzell. The final two, Aalen and Dambach, are in *Raetia*. All but Echzell and Bad Ems are also supported by a coin date.

The latest coin from the *numerus* fort at Niederbieber comes from a hoard, dated 259-260 (Ritterling 1901), and the site has been the classic example used in the *Limesfall* narrative since the excavator associated it with the Alemannic invasion of 259/260 (Ritterling 1936, 67-69). As discussed in section 3.2.2, the ceramic assemblage from the site (Oelmann 1914) has been critical to the establishment of ceramic typologies in Roman Germany despite its reliance on historic events and the lack of stratigraphic excavation. The site assemblage is still considered to date from the second third of the third century, although some forms now reach into the fourth century based on finds from other assemblages (Heising 2003; Heeren 2016, 199-203).⁵²

⁵² Heeren (2016, 199-293) argues that there are similar forms in the Netherlands that are found in grave contexts with late third and early fourth century coin finds. However, until a reassessment of the Niederbieber assemblage's forms and fabrics is conducted, pushing the assemblage later must be taken with caution.

The author of the excavation report on Bad Ems stated that the ceramic evidence implied an occupation into the first half of the third century (Bodewig 1911, 18). It should be noted however, that this report is over a century old. A new analysis of the ceramic finds could provide more accurate detail on the assemblage.

The latest coin from the fort at Butzbach, an antoninianus of Philip the Arab from 247-249, came from the uppermost humus layers of the site. The excavator posited this may have been evidence of a later reoccupation (Müller 1962, 40-41). Although stating that the Rheinzabern assemblage did date into the second quarter of the third century, he tied the destruction of the fort to the Alemannic raids of 233 due to the final coin in the extramural settlement being a denarius of Severus Alexander from 225-228 (Müller 1962, 36-37). Importantly, it has been almost six decades since the ceramic assemblage has been examined, and this interpretation may indeed change with further research.

Likewise, ceramic finds from the pavement of the west gate and the fort ditch at Echzell led the excavator to state that despite the absence of coinage post-dating Severus Alexander, the fort appeared to be occupied into the mid-third century, with at least the *principia* being rebuilt *de novo* after a devastating fire attributed to the Alemanni in 233 (Batz 1963-1964, 45; Batz 1965, 140, 147). Unfortunately, this site has not been fully published. A thorough examination of the site records and working of the finds could perhaps elaborate a clearer picture on the final phases of the site.

At Aalen, the latest coin find from the site is an antoninianus of Valerian dated from 253-259 in the extramural settlement. A coin of Gallienus is known to have come from excavation of the site, but from an unknown location. The latest definitive coin in the fort is a denarius of Severus Alexander from 227 baked into the clay floor of room 12 in the *principia*, giving a *terminus post quem* for the final phase of renovation (Planck 1980, 41; 1988, 71). The presence of late burnt Samian in the ceramic assemblage from the *principia* implies that it was occupied until the 250s, at which point it was destroyed in a fire (Hartmann 1995, 672).

While there was a small amount of Bernhard group IIIa-b at Dambach, Selke (2014, 121-123) categorized this assemblage as being indicative of a site active in the first half of the third century. The latest coin from the site according to FMRD (I 5005, Nr. 66) is a sestertius of Aemilian dated to 253.⁵³

⁵³ While there is an updated coin list in the recent monograph on both the *RLK* and more modern excavations, the coins are not separated by findspot but listed chronologically as an extant corpus of 767 coins (Selke 2014, 187-227). The individual findspots for each coin, which includes two excavations in the extramural settlement

4.2.2 Forts with ceramic dating to the first third of the third century

The three sites that have ceramic dates to the first third of the third century are the forts at Arzbach, Murrhardt, and the western fort at Welzheim, all three on the *Germania Superior* side of the *limes*. Of these three, only Murrhardt has a numismatic sequence that continues into the mid-third century with a coin of Philip the Arab from 248, leading to Krause's (1984, 328) conclusion that this fort was likely occupied until the end of the Roman control in the region. Arzbach was completely destroyed in a fire, giving a sealed context, no coins were found in the excavation. It should also be noted that the ceramic dating is over a century old (Dahm 1900b, 5). Finally, two distinct forts stood at Welzheim: an eastern fort, found to have been abandoned around the turn of the third century (van Driel Murray and Hartmann 1999, 127), and a western fort which had a coin of Caracalla at the end of its sequence, but no perceptible destruction layer. The excavators left open the date of site abandonment in their initial analysis (Mettler and Schultz 1904, 13). More recent excavations, however, have determined that the assemblage of the western fort is typical of the second half of the second century and the early third century (Kortüm 2010, 55). Furthermore, while there were traces of burning found in the modern excavations at the western fort, it was only clear to excavators that they were from a 'later period'. Evidence was found of cellars being filled with fire debris and levelled over, though the cellars themselves were unburnt and revealed no traces of destruction (Kortüm 2010, 54-55). Thus, due to the lack of finds from Arzbach and the uncertainty expressed with Welzheim, it seems that Murrhardt is the only site with a first third of the third century ceramic assemblage where occupation may extend into the mid-third century.

4.2.3 Forts with ceramic dating to the second third of the third century

There are sixteen forts where the ceramic assemblages have been interpreted as indication occupation ended in the second third of the third century, all but five of which also have contextualized coin finds from the mid-third century. The eleven sites with coin dates are Holzhausen, Heftrich, Saalburg, Kapersburg, Seligenstadt, Miltenburg-Altstadt, Kapersburg, Haselburg, Walldürn, Theilenhofen, and Weißenburg. The five without are Inheiden, Altenstadt, Miltenburg-Ost, Ellingen, and Böhming.

Holzhausen was initially thought to have been abandoned after being burnt to the ground in the Alemannic raids of 233, with the final coin, an antoninianus of Philip the Arab from 245, found near the apse of the *principia* considered to be evidence of a brief reoccupation (Pallat

as well along the *Raetian* wall are listed individually in footnotes, making extrapolation of information difficult and unwieldy, thus the decision was made to stick with FMRD listings.

1904, 27-30; Naß 1932, 248-249). A re-examination of the ceramic assemblage, however, pointed towards a later occupation into the second third of the third century based on the presence of late Rheinzabern Ware (Pferdehirt 1976, 19). Only limited synthesis was possible unfortunately, due to the mixing of site finds from Marienfels and Holzhausen (Pferdehirt 1976, 15-16).

The latest coin in the sequence from the fort at Heftrich is an antoninianus of Philip the Arab from 249 (Jacobi 1904, 6). Likewise, a reassessment of the ceramic evidence from the site found that the presence of Urmitzer ware, a Niederbieber 6 dish, and Rheinzabern Bernhard group IIIb implied an occupation of the fort into the second third of the third century (Scholz 2006, 101).

At Saalburg, the latest coin found in excavation was an antoninianus of Valerian from 254-255 (Moneta 2018, 154). Bernhard group IIIb ceramics found in sealed contexts underneath a renovated *via decumana* as well as in the fire debris fill of cellar K242, indicated that the fort was still in occupation into the second third of the third century (Moneta 2018, 151).

A reassessment of the ceramic material from the numerous fort at Kapersburg found that later Rheinzabern material, as well as the presence of Urmitzer Ware, Trier Samian, and material from Mainz indicated an occupation into the second third of the third century (Scholz 2006, 122). The latest coin from inside the fort was an antoninianus of Gallienus from 256, found inside the northern gate tower of the *porta principalis dextra* (Scholz 2006, 30).

Finds from the fill of rubbish pit inside the fort at Seligenstadt indicated an occupation through the second third of the third century (Schallmayer 1987b, 16). While the latest coin in the period associated with the site is an antoninianus of Tetricus I from 270-247, it was not derived from an excavated context (FMRD V 2250, Nr. 41). Ceramic evidence from the fort at Inheiden included one sherd of Dubtatus/Attilus-stamped Trier Samian as well as nineteen sherds of Comitilis-stamped and eight sherds of Julius II/Julianus I-stamped Rheinzabern Ware (Blechsmidt and Strack 1971, 15). Although there is no coin evidence to back up the dating of the ceramics at Inheiden, the ceramic evidence still provides tangible evidence of a late occupation of the site. The late ceramic evidence from the fort at Altenstadt consisted of 33 sherds of Rheinzabern Bernhard Group IIIa-b, making up almost a third of the assemblage of decorated pieces (104 total). Although the coin sequence for the site ends in 222, pre-dating the survey period, the ceramic assemblage led the excavators to assume a mid-third

century end date based on similar finds at the town of Frankfurt-Heddernheim and the fort at Inheiden (Schönburger and Simon 1983, 73).⁵⁴

The latest coin found in excavation at Miltenberg-Altstadt was an antoninianus of Philip from 248. The ceramic finds indicated continuity of occupation at the fort into the second third of the third century, ending no earlier than 249/250 based on the coin find (Beckmann 2004, 104). While no coins were found in excavation of the nearby numerus fort at Miltenburg-Ost, the presence of Urmitzer Ware and late Rheinzabern Ware found in the latest phases of the fort indicated an occupation into the second third of the third century (Jae 2000, 146).

The case of Haselburg is the rare exception as it is the location of the latest coin found in excavation in a fort context on the *limes*, as well as an excavation of a fortlet in the modern period. The latest coin find from the site is an antoninianus of Gallienus from 266-267 recovered in the uppermost fill of the fort ditch under the collapsed fort wall. Moreover, the presence of Bernhard group IIIa-b late Rheinzabern ceramics, and the similarities of assemblages from Miltenberg-Ost and Walldürn led Fleer (2011, 118-119), in his assessment of the finds, to place the assemblage in the second third of the third century. The final site in *Germania Superior* with a ceramic assemblage dated to the second third of the third century is the fort at Walldürn, where the Bernhard group IIIc late Rheinzabern made up 12% of the overall Rheinzabern assemblage (Schallmayer 1985, 216).⁵⁵

Four sites in the survey which contained a final assemblage falling in the second third of the third century all fall along the *limes* in *Raetia*. While the latest coin find in excavation at Theilenhofen is an antoninianus of Volusian dated to 251-253, a later coin of Claudius II dated to 268-270 was found by metal detectorists (Reuter 2007, 93). Notably, there is not a sizable quantity of undecorated late Rheinzabern from the site, the only examples being two sherds of egg and dart E 33/40 out of a total of 63 sherds of Rheinzabern (Simon 1978, 30). Despite lacking more readily identifiable decorated late Samian, these undecorated sherds should still be taken into account as tangible evidence for mid-third century occupation.

The fort at Weißenburg has similar evidence to Theilenhofen, with the latest coin being an antoninianus of Volusian from 251-253. This was not a single find, but was the closing coin in the monetary hoard associated with the site (Grönke 1997, 20). Furthermore, ceramic

⁵⁴ The similarities were based on the fact *Nida*-Heddernheim contained sealed deposits dated by coins to a *tpq* of 259/260, rather than similar quantities, as late Rheinzabern only makes up 20% of their respective assemblages (Schönburger and Simon 1983, 73).

⁵⁵ Schallmayer (1985, 222), however, does not separate the finds between fort and extramural settlement, grouping them both together in his assessment.

evidence from the fill of the fort ditch included a sherd of Julianus II/Julius I-stamped Rheinzabern, although this was found on the spoil heap associated with the ditch fill and not contextually (Grönke and Weinlich 1991, 53).

The numismatic sequence from the fort at Ellingen runs out with a denarius of Septimius Severus dated 193-211 and there is no mid-third century numismatic evidence. Twenty percent of the decorated Samian assemblage, however, did date from the second third of the third century (Zanier 1992, 130). As there were no perceptible destruction layers or closed deposits from the final phases of the site, it was proved very difficult to date the end of the site any more accurately than sometime between 210/220-260 (Zanier 1992 130, 162-163).

The last ceramic assemblage with this dating is Böhming, which has a coin sequence that runs out in the late Severan period at 224. Like Ellingen, there is no numismatic evidence for the mid-third century. However, there was evidence of later occupation in the form of late Rheinzabern potters Primitivus I/II, Pervincus I, and Respectinus II, leaving Gnade (2010, 242) to speculate an end sometime around 240 at the earliest, but postdating the Alemannic raids of 233. While absence of a coin find is notable, the presence of Bernhard group IIIa-b Rheinzabern vessels suggests activity well into the mid-third century.

4.2.4 Forts without ceramic dating

The remaining sites either have no published ceramic data or were excavated at a time before accurate dating could be done, and their assemblages have not been re-examined. Of these 32 sites, five have mid-third century coin dating that comes from excavation. Three forts are on the *Germania Superior* line. These are Stockstadt am Main with an antonianus of Trebonianus Gallus from 249-251, Obernburg am Main with an antoninianus of Philip the Arab from 244-247, and Osterburken with an antoninianus of Trajan Decius from 251-253 (Conrady and Wirth 1910, 39; Teichner 1990, 206; Schumacher 1895, 28). The sole site from *Raetia* is Ruffenhofen, with an antoninianus of Philip the Arab dated 244-249 (Reuter 2007, 90). Eleven sites have numismatic evidence associated with them, but not from excavated contexts. These include Langenhain, Ober-Florstadt, Niedernberg, Jagsthausen, Öhringen, and Mainhardt, in *Germania Superior*, and Rainau-Buch, Halheim, Gnotzheim, Pfünz, and Kösching in *Raetia*. The remaining sixteen sites have no mid-third century coin dating whatsoever. These are Niederberg, Marienfels, Hunzel, Kemel, Kleiner Feldberg, Friedberg,

Arnsburg, Marköbel, Großkrotzenburg Wörth, Lörch, Schirenhof, Unterböbingen, Gunzenhausen, Burgsalach, and Pförring.⁵⁶

Despite the amount of research that has taken place on these sites, the dates scholars have advanced for their occupation – especially for the latest periods of Roman occupation – have derived predominantly from coin finds rather than ceramic evidence. Indeed, studies on the latest phases of these sites end up relying almost solely on numismatic evidence for conclusive arguments (Batz 1986; Reuter 2007; 2012; Scholz 2006). Other forms of dating evidence, particularly small finds dating, are predictably sparse in the latest Roman phases of the region. Further, they provide no greater specificity than ‘third century’ or ‘mid-second to mid-third century’. Overall, the assessment of datable material from these forts sets a baseline for examples with possible mid-third century activity, which can now be used to establish the nature of the evidence.

4.3 Construction at forts

To date, there have been only two partial studies bringing together the evidence for construction and repair at fort sites in Southwest Germany. These were an addendum to Scholz’s (2006, 99-106) reworking of the site finds from the *numerus* fort at Kapersburg in the Taunus region, and Reuter’s (2007, 86-106) survey of the late evidence from fort sites in *Raetia*. Thirteen fort sites in Southwest Germany displayed varying levels of evidence of construction and/or repair at some time during the survey period (*fig 4.2*). As Scholz’s work takes into account all third century features as ‘late’, this survey will strictly deal with sites where there is perceptible mid-third century activity. All but five are concentrated on the western edge of the frontier in the Taunus and Wetterau regions. Notable exceptions are the forts at Miltenberg-Altstadt and Miltenberg-Ost, Osterburken, Öhringen, and Aalen in *Raetia*. However, it could be argued that the presence of only one known example from Aalen is more

⁵⁶ Schönburger’s (1985, 475-490) exhaustive work on the dating of the Dutch and German frontier found enough evidence to include these sites in the latest phases of the region, however it must be admitted that this evidence is often fleeting. For example, there has been no published reassessment of the finds from Niederberg and the coin sequence ends with Severus Alexander (Dahm 1900a), however Nuber (1990 66; 113, 120) and Scholz (2006, 99) have both inferred a mid-third century end to the site based on a general similarity with the assemblage from Niederbieber. At Friedberg, Schmidt (1912, 9) stated that despite lack of evidence from the site itself, it stood into the final stages of the Roman period due to the presence of a milestone from 249 (CIL XIII 9123) found nearby. While there is no evidence from the fort at Gunzenhausen, a hoard of 310 denarii and antoniniani with a closing date of 241 was found over the course of a few years in the extramural settlement (Kellner 1953; FMRD I 5057). The so-called ‘burgus’ at Burgsalach has been the focus of debate over its function and dating. While the earliest excavations turned up second century material, modern work at the site has not been able to determine a later date from the material culture or stratigraphy (Winckelmann 1917; 1918; Hüdepohl 2015). Both Sommer (2015) and Peuser (2016) have recently argued convincingly for a mid-third century date of construction based on architectural parallels and epigraphic evidence from North Africa, but ultimately concluded that without more physical evidence, the proof is not definitive.

due to the lack of published modern excavation in the *Raetian* sector of the frontier compared to that of *Germania Superior*. The evidence for construction and repair can take various forms and therefore is again organized from west to east for sake of convenience, with the findings distilled at the end of the section.

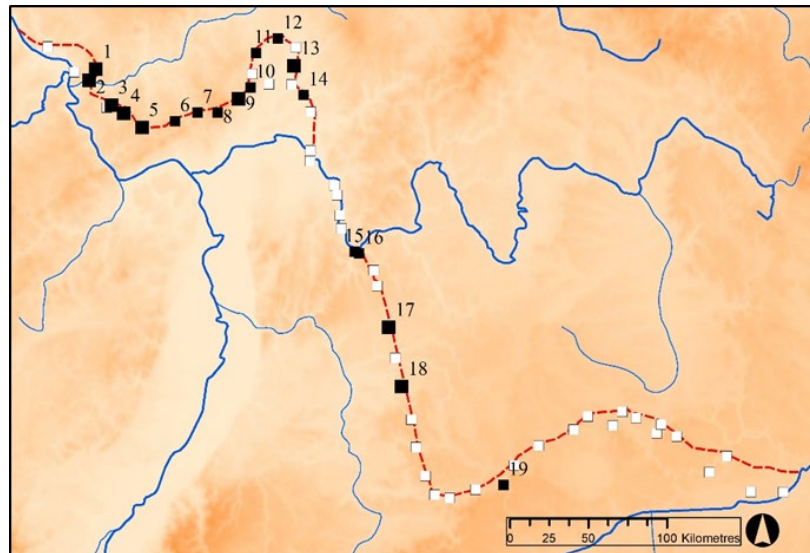


Figure 4. 2: Construction at forts in Southwest Germany. Key: Small black square: Sites with evidence of construction and/or repair; Large black square: Sites with evidence of blocking of fort gates

1. Arzbach 2. Bad Ems 3. Hunzel 4. Holzhausen 5. Kemel 6. Zugmantel 7. Heftrich 8. Kleiner Feldberg 9. Saalburg 10. Kapersburg 11. Butzbach 12. Arnsburg 13. Echzell 14. Altenstadt 15. Miltenburg-Altstadt 16. Miltenburg-Ost 17. Osterburken 18. Öhringen 19. Aalen

4.3.1 Evidence for construction at forts

At Bad Ems, a large layer of heaped stones in the passageway of the western gate was observed during excavation. The author of the report was unsure, however if these were meant to be part of a new road surface or the collapsed barricading of the fort gate (Bodewig 1911, 5).

An 11m long wall was attached to the back of the *principia* at Hunzel which tapered out towards the *porta decumana*. Large amounts of rubble behind the wall in the western corner of the fort were also interpreted as evidence for another possible building behind the wall (Bodewig 1897, 3).

Cellar 203 inside the fort at Zugmantel was deemed to have been a new construction post 238 due to the spoliation of an inscription dated to the reign of Maximinus Thrax as a stone support pillar (Jacobi 1909, 184).

At Heftrich was evidence of either a hearth or oven in the western corner of the *principia* made of spoliated inscriptions which could have possibly dated to the later periods of the fort (Jacobi 1904; Scholz 2006, 101).

A ca. 70cm thick wall was noted to have run between the *porta principalis dextra* and the *principia* at Kleiner Feldberg in the later period of the site (Jacobi 1905, 10). Modern interpretation posited that it may have been evidence for a possible reduction of the size of the fort but admitted that gaps on either side of the wall made the conclusion improbable (Scholz 2006, 101). A lack of excavation in the southwest corner of the fort leaves the issue unresolved.

Saalburg is perhaps the site with the most evidence for construction and repair activity in the mid-third century. The period 5 fort, while unclear when this building phase began, was deemed to be post 233 based on a perceptible burning layer separating the mid-third century numismatic material from much of the earlier finds. A similarity to a burning layer associated with the end of much of the extramural settlement was also noted (Moneta 2018, 151). Furthermore, the beginning of building period 5 was placed in context by a slightly worn antoninianus of Philip the Arab dated 244-247 above the previous burning layer, giving a *terminus post quem* for the construction of room 104 (Moneta 2018, 151).

A new *praetorium* was erected over the previously-burnt structure and ash-filled pits beneath the surface of the *via principalis dextra*. Three sherds of vessels produced by the Rheinzabern potter Victorinus II associated with these pits suggest that repairs to this road took place sometime after 235 following a major fire (Moneta 2018, 151). The *via praetoria* appears to have been repaired during this time as well due to the incorporation of a fragment from a statue base for Severus Alexander (Moneta 2018, KAT-Nr 851,3). Additionally, the foundations of a small heated building in the *retentura dextra* contained *spolia* from an inscription of Maximinus Thrax dated to 236 (Moneta 2018, Kat-Nr K170,2). Their use in the foundations of this building would be consistent with a date post-dating his assassination in 238. The cross-hall of the *principia* was also repaired during this period with spoliated fragments of an inscription of Septimius Severus (KAT-Nr 884,1) and the heated room within the building contained a spoliated statue base of Caracalla (Moneta 2018, Kat-Nr 815,3). The final piece of evidence was the inclusion of heating canals through barrack buildings G-H in the late period, indicating a modification in use of the buildings (Moneta 2018, 151-154).

In the latest phases of the *numerus* fort at Kapersburg, the spoliation of a *fortuna* altar (CIL XIII 7440) in the building material of the hypocaust in the bath of the *praetorium* was initially dated to after the reign of Trajan Decius based on the initial interpretation of its reading. Scholz (2006, 74-78), in a rereading of the altar gave it a general date to the first half of the third century, but importantly stated that the later reading of the inscription should not be ruled out. Furthermore, the reuse of sandstone inscriptions with either a [Sever]ian(a/-us),

[Alexandr]ian(a/-us) or [Gord]ian(a/-us) (CIL XIII 7441b) built into the hypocaust system is further evidence for late construction. Various reworked pieces of sculpture found throughout the site and a reworked inscription of Severus Alexander (CIL XIII 7441a) found in a pit near the eastern gate of the later fort also point towards evidence of later work (Scholz 2006, 78-79). Finally, the erection of drystone and timber-framed buildings as barracks, a so-called 'Wallbau' constructed up against the northern curtain wall, and possible reuse of parts of the *praetorium* as a heating canal are all dated to the latest periods of construction, which is associated with a reduction in use of the fort area to the northeast corner (Scholz 2006, 79). Kapersburg provides the rare opportunity where a site excavated over a century ago can display clear evidence of late activity, though this is due to the odd positioning of these features in the fort over earlier construction.

At Butzbach, the latest construction phase, period five, also consisted of barracks with drystone and timber-framed buildings, in what the excavator interpreted as a reduction in size of the barracks of the period four fort (Müller 1962, 20). There was some debate in the interpretation concerning the latest phases of occupation. This was due to the latest datable coin, an antoninianus of Philip the Arab from 244-247, having been found in the uppermost layers of the humus of the fort. The latest dated coin from a sealed context was a denarius of Severus Alexander found in a cellar in the extramural settlement dated 225-228. This led the excavator to give both a possible end for the site either in 233 or sometime in the 250s (Müller 1962, 36-37, 40-41).⁵⁷

A bastion constructed of material different to that of the fort wall was added to the northern defences of the fort at Arnsburg sometime after the fort's construction (Kofler 1902, 6). In addition, there was a possible construction attached to the south of the *praetorium*, however it was unclear to the excavator if this was a Roman structure or part of the foundations of a medieval church which was built on top of the fort (Kofler 1902, 9). Although admitting there is nothing to phase the site and date these features, Scholz (2006, 103) was inclined to place this activity into sometime during the third century.

While the traces of construction at Altenstadt were ephemeral, they were considered to be conclusively mid-third century based on stratigraphy alone. A site-wide burning layer that was attributed to 233 based on the final coin find of a denarius of Severus Alexander from

⁵⁷ Importantly, the later ceramic report of finds from the extramural settlement found that the assemblage pushed the site dating into the 259/260 realm with the presence of Trier Ware Dexter with vase egg and dart decoration in the assemblage in addition to Rheinzabern (Müller 1968, 19). This would, in theory negate the logic behind the aforementioned conclusion regarding the denarius of Alexander.

222 (Schönburger and Simon 1983, 65). Immediately following this layer, a water channel was found cut through the latest post-holes from the previous period of the fort, and other later features included the construction of an oven over the burning layer. A single pit, as well as the cut for cellar 27 were the latest features on the site (Schönburger and Simon 1983, 65). Furthermore, an altar dedicated to the *genius* of the *collegium iuventutis* dated to 242 (CIL XIII 7427) is known from the site. Though not recovered by excavation, an altar of this date suggests that whether or not there was new construction at this time, the fort was still in use well into the mid-third century (Schönburger and Simon 1983, 72).

The latest feature in the fort at Miltenberg-Altstadt was the careful repair of a collapsed wall in the *aedes* of the *principia*. The excavator dated the repair to the Alemannic invasion of 233 but gave no evidence other than this repair must have taken place sometime ‘in period two’ (Beckmann 2004, 41). Although there was no sign of any destructive fire at the site, the burning layer at Miltenberg-Ost was used to justify this conclusion (Beckmann 2004, 42). As there is no perceptible archaeological evidence to date this other than in the latest building phase of the fort, a mid-third century possibility must be left open.

At Miltenberg-Ost, following a catastrophic fire sometime in the first third of the third century, a stone bath house was built over the remains of the former wooden barracks inside the fort, with a wastewater canal and a latrine cutting through them. Sometime later, a fortification wall was erected over the *via principalis*, while the curtain walls on the southeast side of the fort still appear to have been in use. The presence of Urmitzer Ware as well as later Rheinzabern found in these later levels was the determining factor in giving them a mid-third century date (Jae 2000, 146). As discussed in section 3.6.3, excavation of the fort was only of in the east central range, while much of the site remains unexamined.

Aalen is the only site in *Raetia* with construction evidence. While not conclusively mid-third century, a denarius of Severus Alexander from 227 found baked into the clay floor of room 12 in the *principia* give a *terminus post quem* of 227 for renovation of the room (Planck 1988a, 71). Unfortunately, much of the later phases of the fort are not clear, as they fell victim to agricultural cultivation in later times (Planck 1980; 1988a, 78).

4.3.2 Blocking of fort gates

Recent scholarship has identified the blocking of fort gates with the latest phases of occupation at fort sites (Scholz 2006, 93, Abb. 24). At five of the nine sites with evidence of gate blocking, this was the only sign of construction. Furthermore, there is a difference in the technique of blocking at different sites. Arzbach, Bad Ems, Hunzel, Saalburg, and

Osterburken display evidence of blocking with building material and stone. Arzbach appears to be the only site where two gates were blocked off, the *porta principalis dextra* and the *porta praetoria*, both with a 1m thick wall. The *porta principalis sinistra* was left open, but high levels of modern intrusion left *porta decumana* unexamined (Dahm 1900b, 3). At Bad Ems, there was uncertainty over whether the stone fill in the passageway of the west gate was intended to be used as a new road surface, or as a possible later barricading of the fort gateway (Bodewig 1911, 5). The entranceway of the *porta praetoria* at Hunzel was covered with a very thick rubble deposit, but the excavator was not certain if this was meant to barricade the gate or simply reduce its size (Bodewig 1897, 2). It is also unclear to what period the activity at Hunzel is dated.

The blocking of the *porta decumana* at Saalburg was also unable to be dated with precision. The initial excavation report only noted that the entranceway contained the remains of what appeared remains of walling (Jacobi 1897, 80, *Taf.* 6). Reassessment of the excavations have suggested that the blocking may date from the last phases of construction at the site, but admitted there was no way to confirm this (Moneta 2018, 110).

In the latest phases of main fort at Osterburken, the southeast gate passageway was walled up on top of a burning layer, containing weapons, iron, and an Elbegermanic wire brooch (Schuhmacher 1895, 8-10); the implication being that this was done after a devastating Germanic attack. In the adjoining annexe fort, the northwest gate had been blocked in its later phases by a bracing made of pressed wood, which was still visible in the mortar (Schuhmacher 1895, 15). The southwest gate also had remains some 20cm high of an intentional blockage (Schuhmacher 1895, 17). Meanwhile, at Holzhausen, a series of pits and wooden trestles were constructed behind the *porta principalis dextra*, apparently in order to help fend off an attack. Though its construction period has not been determined, Holzhausen's end is marked by a final burning layer across the site (Pallat 1904, 13). At Kemel, an undated post-hole construction behind the *porta praetoria* with two large posts ca. 40cm in diameter and buried 22cm deep into the ground appear to have been used to block off and fortify the gate (Lehner 1901, 3). Modern scholarship suggests it was in preparation to hold off a pending attack (Scholz 2006, 100). At Echzell, the entrance to the western gate had been blocked twice by buried posts, the later set of which contained fire debris. These

features were not datable, but surmised to be evidence of a late reduction in garrison by the author (Baatz 1963-1964, 45).⁵⁸

The last known example of gate blocking serves as a cautionary example. The passageway of the northern gate at the western fort at Öhringen was walled up based on evidence of piles and thick plastering at some point in the fort's existence (Herzog 1897, 10). Modern scholarship, however, has dated the end of this fort to the beginning of the third century, when the eastern fort was first constructed (Schönbüger 1972, 295).⁵⁹ It is an important reminder that while it may be tempting to date the fort blockings at Arzbach, Hunzel, Holzhausen, Kemel, Saalburg, and Echzell into the latest periods of occupation, it cannot always be assumed. Furthermore, the numismatic and ceramic assemblages from Arzbach imply an end before the mid-third century.

The blocking of fort gates is a phenomenon that has been most widely observed along Hadrian's Wall and in Transylvania (see section 7.2.5). Notably, blockages stand out as a feature in the late second/early third centuries and the early fourth century on Hadrian's Wall (Collins 2012, 77). However, the Hadrian's Wall region suffers from similar methodological problems as the frontier in Southwest Germany, namely that much of the evidence was dug away and collated long before modern excavation techniques were established (Breeze and Dobson 1972, 194-197). Nonetheless, many of the blockages on Hadrian's Wall can be ascribed to practical issues such as redundancy of access north of the Wall (Collins, *pers. comm.*). The same cannot be said for Southwest Germany, where the forts lie behind the palisade in *Germania Superior* and the palisade and stone wall in *Raetia*. The uncertainty of the blockages at Bad Ems and Hunzel make them difficult to interpret, but the erection of defensive structures at Holzhausen, and the use of wooden piles at Kemel and Echzell rather than a complete walling of the gateways, may imply a hasty construction in anticipation of an attack. Furthermore, the fact that the gate blockage at the main fort at Osterburken is over a burning layer with an Elbegermanic brooch and weapons might indicate that the intent was to fortify the structure from further incursions.

⁵⁸ This feature at Echzell is notably missing from Scholz's (2006, 93 Abb. 24, 102-103) survey of late construction and fortification.

⁵⁹ Scholz (2006, 105) admits that while this is most likely not a third century feature, he still includes it in his exhaustive survey of late period construction on the German frontier.

4.3.3 Conclusions

While the evidence is sparse for construction and repair in the mid-third century, some common threads can be seen in the site narratives. Perhaps the most recognizable features due to their cutting through the immediately preceding layers are new cellar cuts followed by heating and water canals. Nevertheless, there could be more late features, but these may not be perceived as such due to non-stratigraphic excavation and/or a lack of datable finds. Indeed, the late fortifications at Arnsburg may well date from the latest periods of the fort, but without the proper stratigraphic evidence or diagnostic material, it would be unwise to assume so.

Repairs, by nature, are hard to date. The sealed contexts underneath the road surfaces at Saalburg, and the denarius of Severus Alexander baked into the floor of the *principia* at Aalen give solid *terminus post quem* dating. The dating of the possible road repair by way of stone deposit at Bad Ems and the repair of the *principia* at Miltenberg-Altstadt, on the other hand, can only be ascribed dating that is late in the sequence of occupation. The only sites with clear evidence of mid-third century construction were either excavated in the modern period, such as at Butzbach, Altenstadt, Miltenberg-Ost, and Aalen, or those which have been extensively reworked in the modern period, as at Saalburg and Kapersburg. The one exception to this is Zugmantel. However, both Zugmantel and Saalburg were, for the period, extensively researched and excavated (Jacobi 1897; 1909; 1936). Consequently, there are strong implications that many instances of construction datable to the mid-third century were missed by pre-modern excavation. Combined with a reliance on the historical record and the subsequent reinforcement of circular argumentation, this has led to an embellishment of the evidence for disruption and upheaval.

4.4 Demolition at forts

Having examined the evidence for construction and continuing occupation at fort sites in the region, it is pertinent to assess the traces of intentional demolition within forts (*fig. 4.3*). It is also important to note that the process of demolition does not always mean a reduction in size, or a partial abandonment of a site. Demolition will often proceed a new phase of construction on any given type of site. As will be seen below, however, it may also proceed a reduction in the occupied space of a site or be the last perceptible phase of activity. It is important to differentiate between these different manifestations of demolition, as they may offer clues as to whether there was a controlled or abrupt abandonment of a site, or if there was an abandonment at all.

A total of six fort sites in Southwest Germany displayed evidence for demolition during the mid-third century. Of these, Saalburg, Kapersburg, and Butzbach are in the Taunus/Wetterau region, Miltenberg-Ost and Haselburg are just south of the Main on the central stretch of the *limes*, and Murrhardt is near the end of the *Germania Superior limes*. No evidence of demolition works was found at any of the forts in *Raetia*.

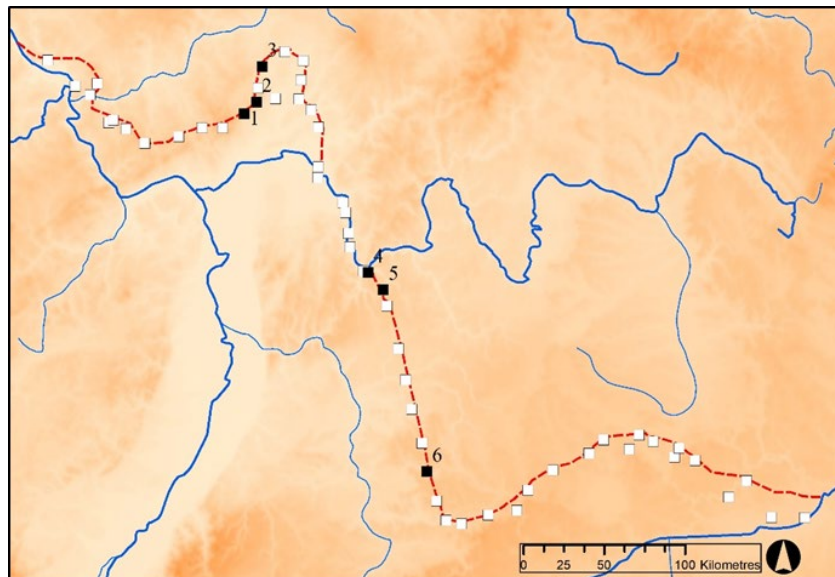


Figure 4. 3: Demolition at fort sites in Southwest Germany.

1. Saalburg 2. Kapersburg 3. Butzbach 4. Miltenberg-Ost 5. Haselburg 6. Murrhardt

4.4.1 Evidence for demolition at forts

At Saalburg, as noted in section 4.3.1, the repair of the *via principalis dextra* overlaid pits backfilled with black ash, dated to the second quarter of the third century based on ceramic finds (Moneta 2018, 151). Additionally, cellar K242 inside the fort was also backfilled with fire debris and levelled over. The debris from this backfill was phased with the mid-third century fire that pre-dated the sequence of construction at the site (Moneta 2018, 151). Finally, the repurposing of barrack range G-H as evidenced by a new series of heating canals cutting through the structure led to an interpretation of a possible reorganization of space within the fort (Moneta 2018, 151-154). However, unlike other fort sites in Southwest Germany, there is no noted reduction in the actual size of the fort itself in these latest phases of occupation. Recent work on the site has speculated if this may point to a movement of civilians inside the fort after a catastrophic fire in the extramural settlement, but there is unfortunately no tangible evidence to back this up (Moneta 2018, 154).

The *numerus* fort at Kapersburg displays the most compelling evidence for a reduction in the size of the fort in the latest phases of occupation. All final activity appears to be limited to the northeast corner of the fort, culminating in a dramatic reduction in the occupied space (Scholz

2006, 79). While all new construction mentioned in section 4.3.1 occurs in this area, the remainder of the site appears to have gone out of use.

Like Saalburg, there is no perceptible reduction in the occupied space of the fort at Butzbach. The levelling of the area of the barracks took place after a catastrophic fire that pre-dated their final drystone construction. This was interpreted as a reduction in the inhabited space by the excavator (Müller 1962, 20). With little evidence for the final phases of occupation of the site, however, this must also remain speculation.

Backfilling of cellars with fire debris associated with the barrack range and the subsequent levelling over of these barracks was noted prior to the construction of the interior bath house at Miltenberg-Ost (Jae 2000, 119). Furthermore, the evidence of a newly-constructed transverse wall over the burning layer associated with the first third of the third century led to the conclusion that the occupied area of the site was reduced like at Kapersburg (Jae 2000, 146). However, interpretation is left open due to the limited area of investigation.

The final burning layers at the fortlet at Haselburg appear to have been intentionally levelled off. Moreover, pit IX/1368 was filled with fire debris before being levelled and the cistern inside the fort was backfilled with debris. This was interpreted as indicating that the site was intended to be reoccupied after the fire. After the site was levelled over, a small hoard of metal objects was deposited in the burning debris backfill of the pit (Fleer 2011, 162-163). The presence of this hoard would imply that the activity was broadly contemporary with the final levelling activity on the site.

The last site with evidence of demolition is from Murrhardt, from the defensive ditches surrounding the fort. The excavator noted a clear stratigraphic relationship between the fort ditch, which appeared to be open at the time of abandonment, and the curtain wall which collapsed into it. Following this, the area was levelled over with rubble (Krause 1984, 327). However, there is no material evidence to associate the levelling of the fort ditch and collapsed wall deposit within the immediate final phases of the site.

4.4.2 Conclusions

Evidence for demolition at fort sites is slight. Moreover, the only sites where demolition events are associated with final site activity are Haselburg and Murrhardt. It is clear, therefore, that traces of demolition activity in mid-third century forts are not necessarily related to any systematic abandonment and/or dismantling of military infrastructure. The demolition at Haselburg could be argued to have taken place shortly after the final destruction of the site due to the burial of the recycling hoard. However, this is still not an entirely secure

conclusion without any datable material culture to tie them together. Likewise, the activity at Murrhardt probably took place sometime after the fort was abandoned, unless the wall was intentionally collapsed and not repaired. Even in these two cases there is still uncertainty about the link between demolition and the latest activities at the site.

At Saalburg, Butzbach, and Miltenberg-Ost, however, demolition post-dated a catastrophic fire and was executed in the anticipation of a rebuild of different parts of the sites. This could also be the case at Haselburg, but the interpretation remains inconclusive without evidence of new construction at the site.

Kapersburg and Miltenberg-Ost arguably have a clear indication that the occupied areas of the sites were greatly reduced in the final phases of occupation. Indeed, the evidence for 'late' spatial reduction has only been noted at *numerus* forts and fortlets (Scholz 2006, 97). This phenomenon was first brought to attention by Reuter (1996) via a reduction in the plans of the fortlets at Anhausen, Hillscheid, and Dörsterberg. Though stating that these changes occurred sometime between 200 and 260, Reuter (1996) concluded that they were likely mid-third century, based on the single find of a denarius of Severus Alexander at Anhausen. There is always a possibility that these changes did occur in the mid-third century, but without conclusive stratigraphic or material evidence, the interpretation is thrown into question.⁶⁰

With the re-examination of Kapersburg and the excavation at Miltenberg-Ost, there was a new attempt to examine the reduction of sites along the *limes*. Based on the evidence from these two sites, Jae and Scholz (2000) tied their reduction to a withdrawal of troops during Severus Alexander's Persian Wars in 233. They further posited that the civilian population then took shelter in the abandoned forts following the Alemannic raids of the same year. They claim the forts were likely reoccupied under Gordian III in 242-243, and were later manned with reduced garrisons that necessitated a smaller space (Jae and Scholz 2000, 415; Scholz 2006, 87-88, 98).⁶¹ Although there was a burning layer from the first third of the third century at Miltenberg-Ost, it would still be near impossible to tie this directly to any particular event, and indeed, it could have resulted from an accidental fire. There is nothing to link it specifically to the year 233, the supposed raid, nor indeed the Alemanni. Furthermore, there

⁶⁰ Outside of Haselburg, there is no strong evidence for mid-third century occupation of fortlets along the *limes* in Southwest Germany. Though unpublished, the fortlet at Rötelsee was considered by the excavator to have been occupied up to 260 (Planck 1975b). Reuter (1996, 81-83) also admits that of the 29 known coin finds from watchtowers on the *limes*, none postdate 209/210. However, the vast majority remain unresearched, as there are an estimated over 900 watchtowers from end to end.

⁶¹ Severus' Alexander's Persian Wars are known from Herodian (vii, 1-2) and *Historia Augusta* (*Severus Alexander* lix, 2-4), with reference to the *limes* further elaborated by Reuter (1999) and Steidl (2000b).

was no destruction apparent at Kapersburg, though it is possible that excavation techniques employed at the turn of the century might not have identified them. A very high level of caution should be taken when trying to tie any structural changes within a complex to historical events. More so when definitive evidence for a reduction in occupied space comes from only two forts in the entire region. Even if the three fortlets named by Reuter (1996) are added to the body of evidence, there is still not enough to tie a larger narrative into what happened at these sites.

4.5 Destruction at forts

Twenty-three sites displayed evidence of destruction in the form of burning layers in the later and/or latest periods of the site either dated or presumed to be in the mid-third century (*fig 4.5*). The majority, sixteen, had a burning layer that was spread across the entire site. These were Niederbieber, Arzbach, Marienfels, Holzhausen, Butzbach, Großkrotzenburg, Stockstadt am Main, Haselburg, and Osterburken in *Germania Superior*, and Unterböbingen, Ruffenhofen, Dambach, Gunzenhausen, Weißenburg, Pfünz, and Pförring in *Raetia*. At the remaining seven sites, burning layers covering only partial areas of the site were detected. These were Saalburg and Arnsburg in *Germania Superior*, and Aalen, Rainau-Buch, Gnotzheim, Theilenhofen, and Böhming in *Raetia*.⁶²

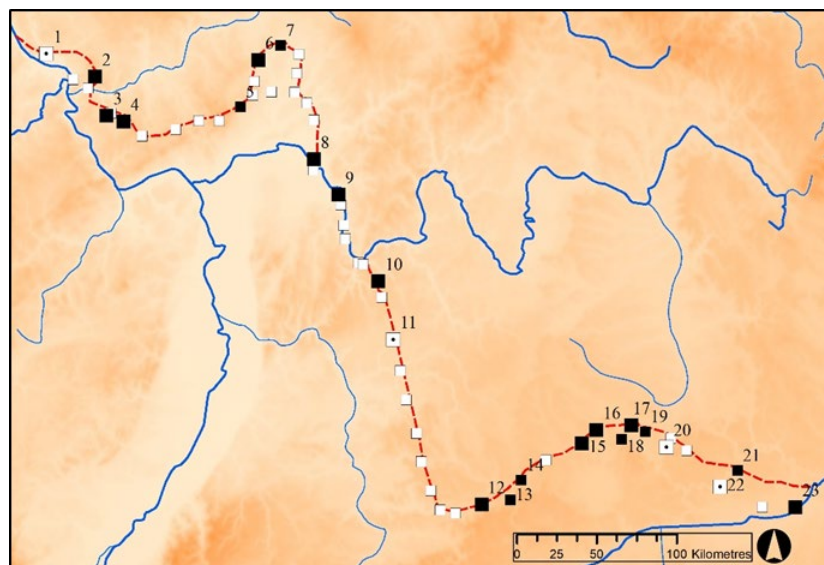


Figure 4. 4: Destruction at fort sites in Southwest Germany. Key: Large black square – Burning layer across entire site; Small black square – Burning layer across partial site; White square with dot – Burning layer across entire site with skeletal remains

1. Niederbieber 2. Arzbach 3. Marienfels 4. Holzhausen 5. Saalburg 6. Butzbach 7. Arnsburg 8. Großkrotzenburg 9. Stockstadt am Main 10. Haselburg 11. Osterburken 12. Unterböbingen 13. Aalen 14. Rainau-Buch 15. Ruffenhofen 16. Dambach 17. Gunzenhausen 18. Gnotzheim 19. Theilenhofen 20. Weißenburg 21. Böhming 22. Pfünz 23. Pförring

⁶² Scholz (2006, 106) also includes Lorch in his survey based on the interim by Stork (1988). The interim states that the barrack buildings were burnt to the ground and later rebuilt in identical fashion. This, however, is not dated, and therefore not included in this survey.

4.5.1 Evidence for destruction at forts

At Niederbieber, evidence of burning was present across the entire site. In addition, two complete skeletons were found inside the *principia*, one sitting against the wall of the *aedes* with a crushed silver *phalera* nearby with the image of an emperor on it and parts of a metal shaft that appeared to be part of a *signum*, as well as a statue with the inscription GENIO VEXILLAR ET IMAGNIF (CIL XIII 7753), and a helmet with a rectangular plate with the inscription COH V (CIL XIII 7765). Inside the central courtyard of the *principia* another skeleton was found with a spear nearby (Ritterling 1936, 23). In addition, the stonework of the south tower of the western gate showed heavy signs of disturbance leading to an interpretation of a possible sapping expedition (Ritterling 1936, 16).⁶³ The presence of two coin hoards found in the destruction deposits of the fort both ended with coins of Gallienus dated to 259-260 (Ritterling 1901).⁶⁴ Noted in section 2.2.2, Niederbieber has played heavily in forming the discussion on *Limesfall* and the end of the region in general, stretching back to Hoffmann's (1823) original publication of the site in the early nineteenth century through to modern research (Schallmayer 1996; Heising 2010; Heeren 2016).

The fort at Arzbach, though demonstrably void of mid-third century material was found to have been destroyed in a fire in its final phase (Dahm 1900b, 3). Likewise, the latest datable material at Marienfels was a hoard ending in the reign of Maximinus Thrax, implying that the fort was occupied at least until 235-238. The fort was completely destroyed by a fire (Bodewig 1903, 7). Holzhausen was completely destroyed in a fire. Although the dating of the destruction has changed over the past century, more recent assessment of the ceramic assemblage confirmed a mid-third century date for the end of the fort (Pallat 1904, 29; Naß 1932, 248-249; Pferdehirt 1976, 20-21).

While there was a fire dated to no later than 231-233 at Saalburg in the *praetentura dextra*, it was unclear if the fire spread to the rest of the fort, or if burning layers found in other buildings, notably the *horrea* and the *principia*, date to a later period. An antoninianus of Gordian III from 243-244 was found in the excavation of burning layers east of the *palaestra* and an antoninianus of Philip the Arab from 244-247 was found in a 1m high deposit of fire debris from the *porta principalis sinistra* (Moneta 2018, 151). However, it was noted that

⁶³ While Niederbieber was seen as a prime example of Alemannic destruction since its publications by Ritterling (1901; 1936), Okamura's (1984, 257-261) reassessment of the disturbed gate tower and the smashed imperial insignia saw a potential standoff between soldiers loyal to the Central Empire and those loyal to Postumus after his secession in 260. This has since become the accepted interpretation for the site (Schallmayer 1996).

⁶⁴ Three additional coin hoards are known from the site, two of which have a mid-third century closing date, as well as two material hoards associated with the destruction deposits.

there were often no finds in the latest features at the site, making the different burning layers difficult to date (Moneta 2018, 154).

A fire destroyed the entire fort at Butzbach before the noted rebuilding of the barracks in the latest period. While dated to 233, it should be noted that this was dated via a denarius of Severus Alexander from 223-228 found in the extramural settlement and not in the fort (Müller 1962, 40-41). Furthermore, the excavator later claimed that there were at least two, and potentially three, burning horizons perceptible in the fort and extramural settlement, leading to some ambiguity in interpretation. Indeed, the presence of a Trier Ware Dexter vase with egg and dart decoration dated up to 259/260 was found in the extramural settlement, further implicating the use of the coin find to date the fort as dubious. (Müller 1968, 15-19).

The fort at Arnsburg ended with a fire debris in both sets of guard towers in the east and west gates, along with a burning layer in the *praetorium* with a number of weapons in the fill, but no discretely mid-third century material was found (Kofler 1902, 2, 9). Large amounts of fire debris were perceived across the entire sites of Großkrotzenburg and Stockstadt am Main in their final stages. Stray finds of an antoninianus of Gordian III dated 238-244 are associated with Großkrotzenburg and an antoninianus of Gallienus dated 259/269-268 with Stockstadt am Main (Wolff 1903, 18; Conrady and Wirth 1910, 38-39). An altar dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus dated to 249 based on consular dates is known from Stockstadt am Main (CIL XIII 6658=RSOR 15).

The final phase of the fortlet at Haselburg ended with the site being entirely burned down to the ground sometime ca. 260-266 (Fleer 2011, 103). Dating of this burning layer is dubious, however, as it was based on the find of an antoninianus of Gallienus dated 266-267 found in the fill of the fort ditch (Fleer 2011, 103). Further, though evidence of demolition and material hoarding above this layer suggests further activity at the site after the fire (Fleer, 2011, 103).⁶⁵ At Osterburken, the final site in *Germania Superior*, burning layers across the fort site as well as the presence of skeletal remains and weapons found inside the annexe fort imply that the site met with a violent end (Schuhmacher 1895, 18; Schallmayer 1991).⁶⁶

⁶⁵ The antoninianus of Gallienus from Haselburg is in fact the latest dated coin in excavation from the *limes*, but the final phasing of the site is suspect. The author gave the last phase of the fort, phase three, three subphases based not on any archaeological material from the site, but on evidence from the nearby sites of Walldürn and Miltenberg-Ost, the Augsburg Victory altar, and historical events (Fleer 2011, 158-159). In fact, none of the final evidence for the site is structural at all. The latest datable feature being the uppermost fill of the fort ditch, containing the coin of Gallienus as well as 'stinking' organic waste, animal bone, and roman pottery, above which was the collapsed curtain wall (Fleer 2011, 119-120).

⁶⁶ While the dating is uncertain, the latest coin from the site is an antoninianus of Trebonianus Gallus, as well as the presence of an altar (CIL XIII 6566) with the epithet 'Philippiana' that had not suffered *damnatio memoriae*

In *Raetia*, while initial reports on the fort at Unterböbingen found no perceptible destruction layers, later interims did identify a burning layer seeming to correlate with the end of the site (Nuber 1967; Planck 1976, 447). However, there is ambiguity as to the date of this, as the latest coin associated with the site is a denarius of Severus Alexander from 232 (Reuter 2007, 87). Significant areas of burning were noted in the area of the barracks and the *horreum* associated with the of the fort at Aalen, but notably, the excavator stated he was not able to attribute it to a violent act (Steimle 1904, 8, 12). Though modern excavations were initially not able to elucidate on any further destruction at the site, the presence of burnt Samian Ware from the assemblage of the *principia* building led to the interpretation that it too was destroyed in a fire sometime in the 250s (Planck 1980; 1988; Hartmann 1995, 672).

Partial burning at Rainau-Buch was observed at the end of the fort, where a hoard of 700 projectile points buried in a box was found, along with an additional 100 projectile points stored in building B. A set of parade armour was also found in a burning layer near the *principia* (Herzog 1898, 3). The *praetorium* included a 3-4m long area of burning (Herzog 1898, 8). Early excavations at Rufenhofen found layers of burning around the barracks, *horreum*, *praetorium*, and in all the gate areas, leading to the interpretation that the whole site was destroyed in a fire (Kohl 1896, 3-5). Modern excavations have unfortunately not turned up any new information (Weinlich 2015).

The earliest excavations at Dambach observed charcoal and black-burnt wall constructions, noting that the 'large building' was destroyed in a fire. Later excavations by the RLK noted extensive burning layers across the site as well (Popp 1901, 3, 8). Reassessment of the material, however, found that it was difficult to determine what the final stages of the site appeared to be, but that the fort and extramural settlement appear to have gone into decline in the mid-third century (Selke 2014, 157, 170).

Burnt wood beams in the area of the barracks and a 10cm thick burning layer in the *horreum* were found in the final sequence of the fort at Gnotzheim. While not in a burning layer, the presence of weapons and armour in the passageway of the *porta praetoria* led to an interpretation of violent destruction for the fort (Eidam 1907a, 5, 9). Untypical for sites in *Raetia*, the latest coins associated with the site are antoniniani of Valerian from 253-259 and Gallienus from 257-258.⁶⁷

leading Scholz (2006, 105) to posit whether or not the forts at Osterburken met their end in or shortly after 253.

⁶⁷ Reuter (2007, 90-91) claims that while this is a rare find, it is untypical of *Raetian* sites, further stating it was found in antiquarian sondages in the mid-nineteenth century.

The forts at Gunzenhausen and Theilenhofen were only partially investigated. In the case of Gunzenhausen, the fort lies underneath the modern town, thus making extensive excavation difficult. However, a burning layer covered the entire site at Gunzenhausen (Eidam 1907b, 5).⁶⁸ Theilenhofen is located in an open field, but excavation was limited to the central area of the fort. Excavators noted that while the *principia* escaped fire, the barracks and *horreum* were burnt down (Eidam 1905, 7-9).⁶⁹

At Weißenburg, the entire fort was burned down in its final phase, with stark evidence in the *horreum* where a 0.3m layer of carbonized wood and grain, was covered by a 1-1.2m layer of clay and tile fragments, and finally a layer of debris and many roof tiles. A skeleton was found buried in the *horreum*, but it was deemed as intrusive rather than during occupation of the site due to the hygienic problems of a corpse in the vicinity of the grain supply (Grönke 1997, 67). In the southern gatehouse of the *porta principalis sinistra*, a skeleton was found underneath a fill of fire debris containing carbonized wood, many roof tiles, and other fragments. The skeleton did not appear to be damaged by the fire. Though not unproblematic due to the lack of finds, the burning was tied to the end of the fort (Grönke 1997, 44). The northern gatehouse of the same gate also contained a large burning layer filled with whole and fragmented tiles and stone shot. There was also a five-centimetre thick carbonized layer that contained a nail, larger iron fitting, gold-plated bronze letter, vault stones, a fragment of a triangular inscription, and two coins (Grönke 1997, 45). The presence of Germanic spearheads in the assemblage from the site led to the interpretation that they belonged to an ‘attacking force against the Roman army’ (Kohl and Trötsch 1906, 39, Taf. VVIII 82-88).⁷⁰ The end of the site is based on the latest find, a hoard of 30 antoniniani ending with the reign of Volusian in 251-253 that was found in the RLK excavation of 1892 near the *porta principalis dextra* on the *via principalis* (Grönke 1997, 111).⁷¹

⁶⁸ The discovery of a hoard of 310 coins ending with the with a coin of Gordian III from 241 in the extramural settlement during construction work was initially tied to the burning layer found at the site, though without any stratigraphic or contextual evidence (Kellner 1953). Reuter (2007, 92) says the hoard comes from a ‘later’ context though this would have to be assumed by the closing date of the hoard alone, as the full archaeological context of its discovery is not published. Okamura (1990, 48) cautions from the temptation to tie this hoard into any signs of destruction without further knowledge.

⁶⁹ These burning layers are not dated by contextual or finds evidence but come from the end of the site. However, reworking of the finds from earlier excavations imply that the site was occupied into the 250s based on the presence of an antoninianus of Volusian dated 251-253 and two sheds of late Rheinzabern egg and dart E 33/40 Samian (Simon 1978, 30).

⁷⁰ Though not initially identified as Germanic, Reuter (2007, 98) in his re-examination of the end of the *Raetian limes* identifies them as such.

⁷¹ This dating is not unproblematic, as there is ambiguity whether the entire hoard was recovered during excavation (FMRD I 5100). One might assume that no later coins known from excavation of the site would bolster the closing date, but site-associated coin finds continue into the later third century. Furthermore, the majority of datable Samian comes from the earlier timber fort, with one of the few exceptions being an

Evidence for a catastrophic fire at Böhming comes mostly from the finds, with the two latest coins from the site being burnt denarii of Severus Alexander both dated to 224. These coins combined with the presence of late Rheinzabern sherds from potters Primitivus I/II, Pervincus I, and Respectinus II, led to the conclusion that the end of occupation at Böhming was sometime after 240, but definitely after 233 (Gnade 2010, 242). Because the traces of burning are only confined to finds, a partial destruction in fire can be assumed.

Another site notorious for violent destruction is Pfünz, where burning layers were perceived across the entire site, some containing skeletal remains and weapons. Three Roman shield buckles were found in the burning layer of the southern gatehouse of the *porta decumana* while two spearheads were found in its northern counterpart (Winkelmann 1901, 5). The *porta principalis sinistra* contained a large burning layer as well and had been blocked at an earlier period with uncut stone. This appeared to coincide with an earlier burning layer found at the site. A burning layer was found in the southeast corner tower, however, which contained parts of a helmet, a bone sword band, belt fittings, and human skeletal remains, including three mandibles (Winkelmann 1901, 6).⁷² Furthermore, the *principia* showed signs of burning, in which an iron chain with shackles was found which still contained a human leg bone. Skeletal remains were also found in a self-contained cistern south of the *principia*, and a self-standing structure in the *praetentura* containing a spatha and shield buckle was burnt down, as was the *horreum* (Winkelmann 1901, 7-8). The coin sequence associated with the site contains issues of Gordian III and Aurelian, but its end has historically been tied to a denarius of Maximinus Thrax dated to 235-236 (FMRD I 5042) and the so-called ‘temple hoard’ from the extramural Jupiter-Dolichenus temple.⁷³

unstratified find of a sherd of late Rheinzabern Julius I/Julianus II that came from the ditch fill of the stone fort (Grönke and Weinlich 1991, 53).

⁷² Okamura (1984, 186) notes the presence of the walled-up gateway into the *porta principalis sinistra* as well as equine rib bones in the earlier of the two burning layers stating ‘no explanation has been proposed for this’, however it would appear to stratigraphically be an earlier feature and therefore unrelated to the end of the site.

⁷³ The hoard, which consists of 94 denarii ranging from the reign of Antoninus Pius to a closing date of 232 under Severus Alexander, was found strewn on the ground within the enclosure wall of the temple precinct. The coins were located below a built-up deposit and next to a box alongside a silver signet ring with incised carnelian, an unincised carnelian, bronze finger ring with a key, two bronze arm rings, and a silver signet ring (Winkelmann 1901, 18). The destruction of the temple and the fort were considered contemporaneous and therefore led to an early interpretation of destruction during the Alemannic raid of 233, which persisted for some time (Winkelmann 1901, 18; Kellner 1978, 140-141, Nr. 10). While this was questioned by Pferdehirt (1976, 23) and Baatz (1986, 989), Okamura (1984, 184-190) questioned the Alemannic agency of the destruction of the site, instead preferring to attribute it to a civil conflict in 235 between troops loyal to Alexander Severus and Maximinus Thrax. Reuter (2007, 192) claims that since the coin could have been minted in 236, this should not be the only accepted interpretation. Furthermore, the lack of worked finds from the site coupled with an unstratigraphic excavation and a continuing coin sequence should leave the site open to a destruction at a later interpretation as well.

Finally, though no human skeletal remains were found at the fort at Pfürring, the presence of weapon and ‘barrack debris’ within the late burning layers indicate a violent end to the site. The *porta principalis dextra* still contained its intact wooden gate, preserved by thorough carbonization (Fink 1902, 2-3). The *principia* was described as ‘ransacked’ and contained a 1.5m tall deposit of fire debris (Fink 1902, 7). No epigraphic material is known from the site from the third century at all. The latest datable material from the site is a denarius of Severus Alexander from 222 and a hoard of ca. 1200-1300 bronze coins ending with a dupondius of Severus Alexander from 223, leaving its end date open to interpretation (Reuter 2007, 107; FMRD I 1119).

4.5.2 Conclusions

At 23 examples, just under half of the 56 forts examined show any evidence of burning in the final phases of occupation. Furthermore, only a handful of sites were interpreted as having suffered a fire across the entire fort; Arzbach in *Germania Superior* and Unterböbingen, Gunzenhausen, Pfünz, and Pfürring in *Raetia*. The only example with isolated burning layers but no datable evidence is at Arnsburg, but dating issues with burning layers at other sites are problematic. For example, the hoard found in the extramural settlement at Gunzenhausen may indicate a mid-third century destruction, but its location some 300m away from the fort means its use in interpretation should be taken with caution.

Saalburg and Butzbach are two sites where the destruction layers are difficult to date but may come from later periods. While there are sealed burning layers at Saalburg that date into the mid-third century, the potential for more is likely. These, however, are impossible to discern from the immediately previous burning layer to the overall lack of finds in these final contexts. This is compounded by the fact that burning on the site is sporadic, meaning some buildings may have continued without damage while others, such as the *praetorium*, were rebuilt. In contrast, while the burning layer across the entire site at Butzbach is most likely from before the mid-third century, ambiguity distinguishing between the different burning layers and with the dating leave the possibility open for a later date. Therefore, Saalburg can be said with certainty to display proof, while Butzbach cannot.

The largest cross section of sites contains some datable material that is either from excavation or associated with the site that would imply a mid-third century date for a final destruction layer. While hoards found in excavation provide the dating evidence for a mid-third century dating for the destruction at Niederbieber, Marienfels, and Weißenburg, isolated coin finds and ceramics date the destruction levels at Holzhausen, Aalen, Rainau-Buch, Ruffenhofen, Theilenhofen, and Böhming. Both coin finds and epigraphic evidence indicate that Stockstadt

am Main and Osterburken have a clear mid-third century destruction date. Stray coin finds from Großkrotzenburg and Gnotzheim may indicate a mid-third century destruction for these sites as well. All burning layers at sites were seen in excavation, except at Böhming, where they were perceived solely through the existence of burnt late material. Thus, based on current evidence, definitive mid-third century destruction at sites is present at Niederbieber, Marienfels, Holzhausen, Saalburg, Stockstadt am Main, Osterburken, Aalen, Rainau-Buch, Ruffenhofen, Gnotzheim, Theilehofen, and Weißenburg. Probable mid-third century destruction can be seen at Großkrotzenburg, Unterböbingen, Gunzenhausen, Böhming, Pfünz, and Pförring.

Finally, there can be little genuine discussion of violence and destruction without the presence of implements of violence as well as its victims. All too often in the archaeological record, the presence of burning layers is interpreted as clear evidence of destruction by way of violent action, when, as discussed in section 3.7.1, the possibility of accidental fire or intentional destruction by the occupying garrison is just as possible, if not more so. Weapons appear on their own in the final burning layers at Arnsburg, Rainau-Buch, Ruffenhofen, and Pförring. It is perhaps unlikely that something as valuable as weapons and armour would have been left at the site as it was abandoned. However, it is important to note that the presence of arms at fort sites, even in their destruction layers, should not be seen as necessarily strange given that by these were military installations. Of these, not enough dating information is available at Arnsburg to securely date its final destruction in the mid-third century, and the evidence for weapons at Rainau-Buch comes from a hoard of projectile points in a box, and a likely depot of projectile points found in the fort. At both sites, only partial destruction was visible, while Ruffenhofen and Pförring were both completely destroyed by fire.

This leaves the four sites where human skeletal remains were found that date to the mid-third century. The two skeletons at Niederbieber found in the *principia* both tell different tales. The skeleton in the *aedes* was posited by Okamura (1984, 260-261) to be an *imaginifer* based on the finds surrounding the skeleton, while the second skeleton in the courtyard was found with a weapon nearby. Likewise, the multiple skeletal remains at Osterburken found in the late burning layers in multiple excavations, along with the single skeleton at Weißenburg and the numerous weapon finds at both sites show a violent end. All three of these sites were dated with definitive proof to have lasted into the mid-third century as well. Interestingly, the final site at Pfünz, where there are the skeletal remains of multiple individuals, has no complete skeletal remains. Should this imply some activity after the destruction of the site, if only just scavenging by animals? The evidence of three mandibles and the iron chain still

holding a prisoner's leg combined with the numerous finds of weapons and armour may be an even more grim reminder of violence in the site's last phase. It is also noteworthy that this is the only site with human remains associated with the final burning layers where a mid-third century date was probable, but not certain.

Thus, while the evidence for burning is seen in 23 of the 56 sites examined, the actual evidence for violence is markedly less (Planck 1988b, 278). Furthermore, only three of the sites with definitive evidence contain human skeletal remains in the final burning layers. Notably, two of these sites are at either end of the frontier, Niederbieber and Pfünz, while the other two, Osterburken and Weißenburg, are more centrally located. However, one need not look far to see that the lack of human remains is not necessarily out of the ordinary. At Harzhorn in Lower Saxony, the discovery of a large battlefield site dated on numismatic and radiocarbon dating to the 230s was interpreted as evidence of a punitive expedition into free Germany under Maximinus Thrax (Berger et al. 2010; Moosbauer 2015). Despite a cart having gone over a cliff edge, possibly in escape, and the large amount of *militaria* that littered the area, there was a noted lack of human remains (Moosbauer 2015). Furthermore, at the famous battle site at Kalkriese, though some 220 years earlier, the dead were found largely interred in mass graves rather than littered on the battlefield (Moosbauer 2015). A lack of skeletal remains should not necessarily be seen as an absence of conflict. However, the historical dating of ceramic finds and thus sites from the region, combined with the lack of stratigraphic excavation in many cases, means that evidence to support a full-on overrunning of the frontier, either by rebel forces or Germanic raiders is not present in the overall site record.

4.6 Hoarding at forts

There is little evidence for hoarding from published fort sites in the region from the mid-third century. With only six sites that display evidence, the dataset is scant considering the large number of sites. However, the sites are split evenly, with Niederbieber, Saalburg, and Haselburg in *Germania Superior* and Rainau-Buch, Dambach, and Weißenburg in *Raetia* (fig 4.5).

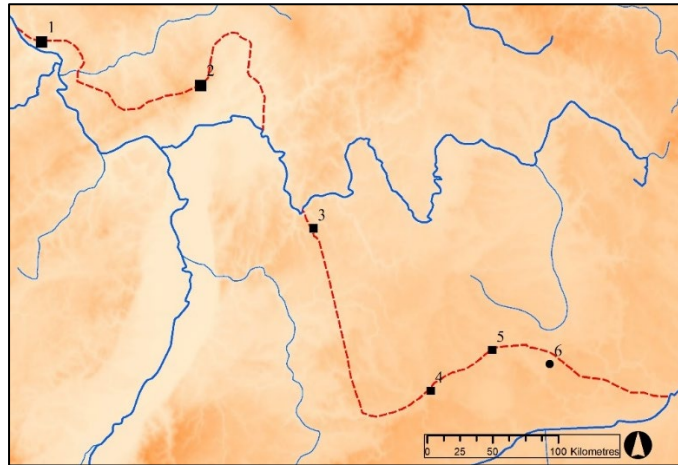


Figure 4. 5: Hoarding at fort sites in Southwest Germany. Key: Small black square – Monetary hoard; Black circle – Material hoard; Large black square – Both.

1. Niederbieber 2. Saalburg 3. Haselburg 4. Rainau-Buch 5. Dambach 6. Weißenburg

4.6.1 Evidence for hoarding at forts

Niederbieber not only has evidence of both material and coin hoarding, but with a total of four hoards, has the largest number of mid-third century examples in the region. Unfortunately, only two of the hoards, Niederbieber I and II are fully published. These were found in excavation in 1901 and thus were identified before the publication of RIC. Furthermore, Niederbieber falls within the area of one of the very few as of yet unfinished volumes of FMRD, meaning that there has been no modern published reworking of the coins. The two unpublished hoards include Niederbieber III, which was found in excavation in 1906, and Niederbieber IV, which was found sometime before 1811 (Heising 2010, 61-63).

Niederbieber I was discovered in the so-called *fabrica* underneath a layer of coal, tile and rubble. Laying on the floor under an upturned silver bowl were either 192 or 193 antoniniani ranging in date from Caracalla to a final coin of Gallienus from 258 (Ritterling 1901, 95-96).⁷⁴ In addition to the coins and the bowl, jewelry including two golden needles with emerald heads connected by a chain, a gold earring with emeralds, and an onyx cameo were found. A lockplate and bronze fasteners, though nearby, were considered to be evidence for a possible wooden box that contained the hoard (Ritterling 1901, 95). The second hoard, Niederbieber II, was found on the limestone floor next to the doorway in a small building east of the *fabrica* under a ca. 35 cm layer of fire debris. It contained both denarii and antoniniani, totalling 389 coins ranging from Clodius Albinus to Gallienus, with a closing date of 259. This is also the latest dated coin from the site. No container was noted (Ritterling 1901, 100-

⁷⁴ The latest coin in the hoard, the antoninianus of Gallienus from 258 was found later in the same area but was deemed to be part of the hoard due to its being in a similarly unused condition to the coins from the hoard (Ritterling 1901, 95-96).

111). Niederbieber III, also discovered in excavation, was found in a hollowed-out area of the tufa flooring in the officers' barracks. In this hollow was a bronze kettle that contained 889 antoniniani ranging in date from Elagabalus to Gallienus with a closing date of 259. In addition to the coins, two silver bowls were found inside the kettle, while two silver-plated bronze platters were found nearby (Ritterling 1936, 48). Niederbieber IV, the final hoard, contained 256 denarii and antoniniani ranging from the Republican period to Gallienus with a closing date of 257-259, and was found in 'Kelch aus galben Metall (a goblet of yellow metal)' (Heising 2010, 63).

Although Saalburg also has monetary and material hoards, unlike Niederbieber, the finds are separate from each other. A monetary hoard ending with Gordian III and a closing date of 238 is associated with the site (FMRD V 1169). While this hoard potentially contains over 600 coins, the initial reports did not differentiate between stray finds and finds from the hoard itself. The totals range from 522, the number claimed to have been found as a hoard, to 633, the total number of coins listed from the initial publication. While there are 24 copper-alloy coins from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the rest are silver. Due to the open-ended recording of the find, little to no information can be gleaned from this hoard, other than it was part of a large deposit found at the site. The material hoard, the so-called bucket hoard, was found in 1875 (Moneta 2018, 154). This was another chance find and included a total of thirteen vessels, including the iron bucket in which they were found.⁷⁵ While Moneta (2018, 154) claims that the dating of the assemblage is to the second third of the third century, this claim should be taken lightly due to the lack of context.

At Haselburg, two material hoards were found in the uppermost layers of occupation of the site. The first hoard contained three swords, tools, nails, and fragmented pieces of iron. These were surrounded by the remains of a wooden box (Fleer 2011, 162-163). This was interpreted as a possible recycling hoard, due to the disparate assemblage of pieces contained within the box. The second hoard, briefly mentioned in section 4.3.1, was found deposited in the fire debris backfill of pit IX/1368. It consisted of a heavily repaired sieve, a dagger, an iron clump, and a whetstone (Fleer 2011, 162-163). Given the nature of these finds, they might be considered a collection of pieces for recycling as well. However, it should be noted that no evidence of metal recycling was found above the burning layers on the site.

⁷⁵ The catalogue in Moneta 2018, however, only lists twelve items including the bucket.

At Rainau-Buch, as mentioned in section 4.5.1, a hoard of 700 projectile points stored in a box was found buried at the fort in 1885. An additional cache of 100 more projectile points was found during excavation of building B (Herzog 1898, 3).

Sometime during the mid-nineteenth century, a hoard of seven bronze vessels was discovered within the area of the fort at Dambach. The hoard contained four Gallo-Germanic pitchers dated to around the year 200 (Selke 2014, 79). Due to this, Petrovszky (2000) decided that the hoard likely dated to before 233 as these types of vessels are not normally present in mid-third century hoards. However, multiple scholars have suggested that if the vessels were never collected, this would mean that they would have been left in the ground for some 20 years before the end of the site (Popp 1901, 3, 8; Kellner and Zahlhass 1993, 145; Reuter 2007, 90; Selke 2014, 170). While there are merits to either viewpoint, they should be taken with caution. Just because a vessel is not common in later assemblages does not necessarily mean that it was not deposited at a later date. Likewise, without any real stratigraphic context for the hoard, there is no certainty that the hoard was deposited in the mid-third century. Both arguments also imply that the hoard would have been buried due to fear of a raid or a forthcoming attack. Yet as was noted in section 3.4, the common tendency to argue that hoards were deposited in anticipation of a forthcoming attack, should be treated with caution, especially where the hoard is without contextual information.

Finally, at Weißenburg, a monetary hoard of thirty antoninianiani from Gordian III to Volusian with a closing date of 251 was found during excavation in 1892 near the *porta principalis dextra* on the *via principalis* (Kohl and Tröltzsch 1906, 30). Although these are the latest datable coins from the site, later assessment of the hoard and its provenance has suggested that it may not have been completely recovered (FMRD I 5100).

4.6.2 Conclusions

Looking first at the evidence for material hoarding, there is little information that can be gleaned from the data. The recycling hoards from Haselburg were placed in the very last phases of activity, with one clearly being deposited in the fire debris associated with the end of the site. Whether this is post-Roman or not, however, is unclear. The bucket hoard from Saalburg, the two projectile point hoards from Rainau-Buch, and the bronze vessel hoard from Dambach have little to no contextual information. Thus, there is not much that can be said besides they were buried at some point at these sites, with the Dambach hoard deposited sometime after 200 based on stylistic evidence.

Out of the six monetary hoards known from fort sites, only Niederbieber I-III are complete and have archaeological context. Importantly, it appears as if none of them were buried either. The presence of containers and the precious metal objects found with Niederbieber I and III may suggest that these were assemblages of personal valuables collected for safe keeping. Although the fittings for a box were found nearby rather than with Niederbieber I, the fact that the hoard was found under the upturned platter and strewn about gives credence to the box belonging to the hoard.

The three remaining monetary hoards, Niederbieber IV, Saalburg II, and Weißenburg, lack information essential to their fuller interpretation. This is due to the lack of provenance for Niederbieber IV and Saalburg II. Niederbieber IV is considered a complete hoard, but it should not be discounted that it was found long before the advent of proper recording techniques. While the Weißenburg hoard contains the latest coin finds known from the fort, uncertainty over its original contents make interpretation difficult. This is even more so for Saalburg II, where there is no confidence as to which of the 633 coins should be associated with the hoard, leaving its mid-third century closing date an open question. Therefore, while Fischer (1999) states that all material hoarding in the region is the result of ‘Angsthorte’, Heeren (2016, 196) is correct in noting the problematic issues with this interpretation; the phenomenon of mid-third century hoarding at forts cannot be attributed to a single event.

4.7 Extramural settlements in the mid-third century

Before making general conclusions about military sites, it is important to look at the evidence from the extramural settlements where possible. After working through the material from extramural settlements, assessment of the evidence from forts versus extramural settlements will be assessed alongside existing narratives.

Thus, having looked at the evidence from forts, reports from extramural settlements, where possible, need to be addressed. There is a total of eighteen extramural settlements in Southwest Germany that have enough published information to examine separately from their associated forts (*fig. 4.6*). Out of these eighteen, nine have ceramic dating, while nine only have coin dating.

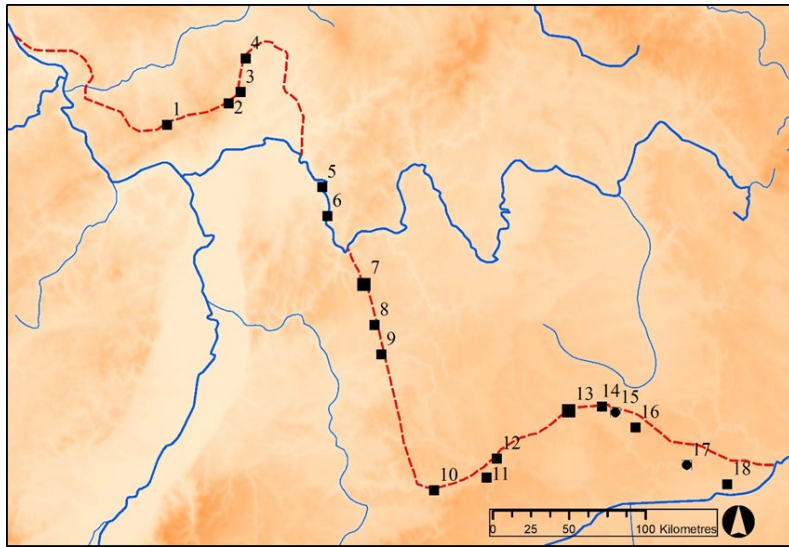


Figure 4. 6: Datable material at extramural settlements in Southwest Germany. Key: Circle: Sites with numismatic dating; Small square Sites with ceramic dating; Large square: Sites with dendrochronological dating

1. Zugmantel 2. Saalburg 3. Kapersburg 4. Butzbach 5. Stockstadt am Main 6. Obernberg am Main 7. Walldürn 8. Osterburken 9. Jagsthausen 10. Schirenhof 11. Aalen 12. Rainau-Buch 13. Dambach 14. Gunzenhausen 15. Theilenhofen 16. Weißenburg 17. Pfünz 18. Kösching

4.7.1 Extramural settlements with ceramic dating to the first half of the third century

Only Dambach, in *Raetia*, was deemed to have an assemblage with a date ranging the first half of the third century. Selke reached the same conclusions for both the fort and extramural settlement finds from Dambach, with a small percentage of Bernhard Group IIIa-b in the Rheinzabern assemblage indicating activity in the first half of the third century (Selke 2014, 121-123; see section 4.2.4). The latest coin attributed to the extramural settlement was an antoninianus of Philip, dated 246-248 (Selke 2014, 213, Nr. 534).

4.7.2 Extramural settlements with ceramic dating to the first third of the third century

Three extramural settlements displayed ceramic evidence for the first third of the third century, all of which are on the *Germania Superior* line of the frontier. The first, Saalburg, was deemed to have a ceramic assemblage dated to the first third of the third century due to similarities to the ceramic depot found in the extramural settlement at Langenhain. (Moneta 2010, 156-159). Because there are no coins post-dating 233 from any of the houses, modern assessment has claimed that the settlement was abandoned prior to the supposed Alemannic raid of 233, but importantly does not attempt to directly tie it to the event (Moneta 2010, 156-159). An antoninianus of Postumus dated to 260 was found in the extramural bath house, and an antoninianus of Claudius II from 268-270, though not from an excavated context, is associated with the road leading out of the settlement towards Frankfurt-Heddernheim (Moneta 2018, 154).

At Obernberg am Main, the latest ceramic find was a badly-burned sherd of stamped Rheinzabern Julianus II/Julius I (Teichner 1990, 195). The implications of this find suggest

that the extramural settlement was abandoned sometime during the first half of the third century. The noted lack of Urmitzer Ware led the excavators to assume the site was destroyed during the Alemannic invasions of 233 (Teichner 1990, 207). While the coin profile of the fort and extramural settlement extends into the reign of Philip the Arab, the excavators claimed this was evidence that the fort continued to be occupied until the *Limesfall*, with the extramural settlement abandoned sometime earlier (Teichner 1990, 106). Further, recent excavations of the *beneficiarius* station in the extramural settlement found that the ceramic assemblage had an end date sometime in the 230s or 240s, but concluded that the site was abandoned in conjunction with the Alemannic raids of 233 due to a lack of post-Severan coinage (Steidl 2005, 91-92).

Ceramic finds from Jagsthausen did not extend past the early third century according to a modern reworking of the material from the site (Thiel 2005, 228). This led to the conclusion that large parts of the settlement were abandoned in the early third century. Thiel (2005, 129) did note, however, that this was difficult to say with certainty as most of the finds were unstratified. Epigraphic evidence in the form of a building inscription (CIL XIII 6562=AE 1995, 1166=RSO 073) from 244, and a votive altar to *Fortuna* (CIL XIII 6552=ILS 2605=RSO 008) from 248, both found in the southern bath house would seem to confirm mid-third century activity in the extramural settlement (Thiel 2005, 48).

Out of these three sites with first third of the third century ceramic dating, the evidence from the bath houses at Saalburg and Jagsthausen give credence to the possibility of activity in the settlements past their ceramic dating. Although the epigraphic evidence from Jagsthausen is more definitive than the single coin of Postumus from Saalburg, neither should be discounted. Furthermore, the lack of material from Obernburg am Main may imply an earlier abandonment of the site. Unfortunately, the report on the ceramic assemblage from the *beneficiarius* station is too vague to make further comment. The find from earlier excavations of a sherd of potter Julianus II/Julius, however, is noteworthy. While a single sherd may not be conclusive evidence, a sherd from a vessel of this potter from an unstratified context at Weißenburg was cited as evidence for occupation of the fort in the mid-third century (Grönke and Weinlich 1991, 53; see section 4.2.3 for discussion).⁷⁶ Thus, the possibility for mid-third century activity at all three of these sites cannot be ruled out.

⁷⁶However, the piece from Weißenburg is bolstered by evidence of a numismatic hoard with a closing date of 251-253 found within the fort (FMRD I 5100).

4.7.3 *Extramural settlements with ceramic dating to the second third of the third century*

Five sites contained evidence for ceramic dating ending in the second third of the third century. Two sites are from *Germania Superior*, the extramural settlements at Butzbach and Walldürn, with the remaining three, Aalen, Rainau-Buch, and Weißenburg, in *Raetia*.

In general, the ceramic assemblage from Butzbach is considerably later than the excavators expected with sherds from Trier (720 sherds, 36%) and Rheinzabern (536 sherds, 26.8%), making up a total of 1256 out of 1998 total sherds from the settlement, or equating to 62.8% of the total assemblage (Müller 1968, 15). However, the latest outlier was stamped Dexter Trier Ware with vase egg and dart decoration, dated in the assessment to 259/260 (Müller 1968, 19). There is a noted lack of mid-third century numismatic material, as the latest coin from the extramural settlement is a denarius of Alexander Severus from 225-228 (Müller 1962, 36-37). This assessment was conducted over 50 years ago, however, and a modern reevaluation could possibly extend the date range.

While the ceramic assemblage from Walldürn was not differentiated between fort and extramural settlement, the excavator deemed the evidence reasonable enough to imply an end date at the end of the second third of the third century (Schallmayer 1985, 222; see section 4.2.3). However, this is problematic as it is unlikely both the extramural settlement and the fort ended at the same time. As forts are the focus of investigation, this may reflect more in interpretation of the extramural settlement.

At Aalen, Luik (1994, 354-355) stated that the latest find in the ceramic assemblage from the extramural settlement were sherds of Rheinzabern potter Januarius II. This is bolstered by the latest coin find from the settlement being an antoninianus of Gordian III dated to 241, but Luik (1994, 355) admitted that without further systematic excavation the later phases of activity were difficult to understand.

Finds from the extramural bath house at Rainau-Buch included 96 sherds of type III rätische Ware, which has a broad date range from the first century to the mid-third century (Seitz 1999, 190-191). Only one sherd of Bernhard group IIIa was present, making up a total of 2.38% of the entire Rheinzabern assemblage (Seitz 1999, 177). Excavations of houses in the extramural settlement found the latest features contained sherds from a Niederbieber type 5b dish and two Niederbieber type 30 beakers, with the latest coin from the site being an antoninianus of Philip dated to 248 (Greiner 2008, 46-47). The finds dating is bolstered by two dendrochronological dates. The first comes from a charred beam taken from well 7 at the end of building phase 2b, with a felling date of 239 +/- 10 years (Greiner 2008, 40). The

second date comes from various pieces of wood that were found in the fills of wells 9 and 13 in building phase 2c. These included a 1.79m post and a water pipe in the fill of well 13, as well as waste offcuts found in the fill of both wells. All of these came from the same tree, which had a felling date between October 253 and April 254 (Greiner 2008, 40).

Visy (1988, 127) initially claimed that the extramural bath house at Weißenburg was destroyed by the Alemanni in 233 based on the latest coin being an issue of Severus Alexander dated 228-231. A later assessment of the ceramics, however, found that the latest datable sherd was from a Rheinzabern egg and dart E31 Bernhard group IIIb vessel, pushing its abandonment to the period between 233 and 260 (Burmeister 1990, 130). However, discerning the latest Roman phases of the extramural settlement is difficult because of heavy truncation caused by later intrusion (Strobl 1998, 37).

4.7.4 Extramural settlements without ceramic dating evidence

The nine remaining sites with activity do not have any ceramic dating.⁷⁷ Seven of them have coin finds from the mid-third century. These include a hoard of 140 silver coins ending with an issue of Trajan Decius dated 249-251 at Zugmantel, an antoninianus of Postumus dated 260-268 found in the extramural bath house at Kapersburg, a sestertius of Gordian III dated to 240 associated with the extramural settlement at Stockstadt am Main, an antoninianus of Philip dated 244-247 from the bath house at Schirenhof, a hoard of 310 silver coins that ends with an issue of Gordian III dated 241-243 at Gunzenhausen, a metal detector find of an antoninianus of Claudius II dated 268-270 at Theilenhofen, and a hoard of 240 denarii ending with an issue of Gordian III dated to 241 at Kösching (Sommer 1988, 526; Scholz 2006, 82; FMRD I 6007, Nr. 12; Reuter 2007, 86; Kellner 1953; Reuter 2007, 92-93; Kellner 1953, 168).⁷⁸

Two sites included neither ceramic nor coin dating but are considered to have evidence of mid-third century activity. Recent evaluations of the extramural settlement at Osterburken found that the dendrochronological dating indicated a felling date of Winter 227 for wood used in the latest phases of timber construction (Huther 2014, vol. ii, 309, Tab. 6 Teil 4). Furthermore, an altar dated to 238 is the latest datable inscription from the *beneficiarius* station at Osterburken, indicating the site was still in use at least in the beginning of the mid-

⁷⁷ In addition to these sites, mid-third century coinage is associated with extramural settlements at Mainz-Kastel (FMRD V 1184, 1295), Friedberg (FMRD V 2119, 2123), Kleiner Feldberg (FMRD V 1104), and Miltenberg-Altstadt (FMRD I 6070), but the finds are not clearly provenanced. Furthermore, there is no other evidence for mid-third century activity at these sites, so they have not been included in the study.

⁷⁸ At Theilenhofen, there is an earlier mid-third century metal detector find of an antoninianus of Aemelian dated to 251, which Reuter (2007, 92-93) accepts as a legitimate Roman period find, discrediting the coin of Claudius II.

third century (Schillinger-Häfele 1974, 540; Reutti 1979, 242). At Pfünz, confusion over antoniniani of Gordian III and Aurelian initially led to speculation that the settlement was destroyed in 233, but then reoccupied until 260 (Batz 1993, 203; Czysz et. al. 1995, 501). Reuter (2007, 102), however, demonstrated by careful rereading of the initial report that the coin of Gordian III came from an antiquarian collection and the coin of Aurelian came from the surrounding area, but not from the extramural settlement. This meant that ultimately, like the fort, the extramural settlement at Pfünz contained no datable mid-third century material.

4.8 Construction at extramural settlements

There is a total of seven extramural settlements that showed evidence for construction and/or repair during the mid-third century (*fig. 4.7*). These are disparately spread across the frontier, with Zugmantel being the solitary site in the Taunus/Wetterau region, followed by settlements at Walldürn, Osterburken, and Jagsthausen in the central sector, and finally Rainau-Buch, Weißenburg, and Pfünz in *Raetia*.

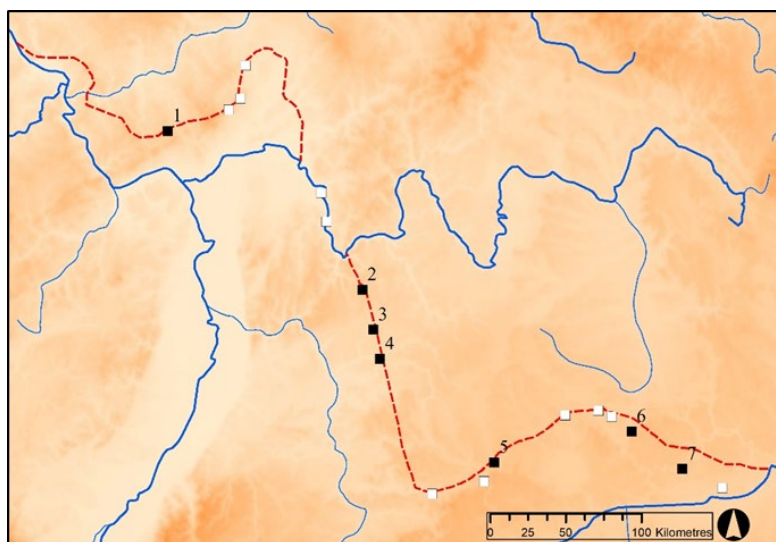


Figure 4. 7: Construction at extramural settlements in Southwest Germany.

1. Zugmantel 2. Walldürn 3. Osterburken 4. Jagsthausen 5. Rainau-Buch 6. Weißenburg 7. Pfünz

4.8.1 Evidence for construction at extramural settlements

There is little evidence for building work in this period from the settlement at Zugmantel, but the construction of cellar 323 over the backfilling of cellar 322 was dated securely to after 247-249 based on numismatic evidence (Sommer 1988, 526-527).

Excavation of the later bath house at Walldürn found that the hypocaust structure of construction phase two was made out of sandstone, which is not a fire-resistant material (Batz 1978, 87). This resulted in the hypocaust beginning to split and fracture, which led to the collapse of the *caldarium* floor. Instead of being repaired, the room was repurposed as a *praefurnium* and the *tepidarium* was converted into a new *caldarium* (Batz 1978, 87). A

timber *apodyterium* was also constructed (Batz 1978, 89). While the exact beginning of phase two is unknown, the initial construction must have taken place sometime after 232 based on the date on a *fortuna* altar in the demolition layer of phase one, and before 248 due to an antoninianus of Philip the Arab found in the phase two structure (CIL XIII 6592; Batz 1978, 88-89).

At Osterburken, there is no direct evidence for period construction. However, the felling date of Winter 228 for wood used in timber structures at the *beneficiarius* station could potentially have been used in the period (Huther 2014, vol. ii, 309, Tab. 6 Teil 4).

While there is no direct stratigraphic evidence at Jagsthausen for mid-third century construction, the presence of a building inscription from the southern extramural bath house dated from 244-247 that stated the building had been restored after collapsing from old age (CIL XIII 6562=AE 1995 1166=RSO 073). The idea that the southern bath house may have been built *de novo* at this time was put forward by Thiel (2005, 193), as the larger northern bath house had gone out of use by this period. Further evidence was the presence of sandstone hypocaust piles, not unlike those found at Walldürn (Thiel 2005, 192).

Period IVa of the extramural bath house at Rainau-Buch went through a number of changes. These included the blocking of wastewater channels in room D3 with brick and mortar, the construction of a new *sudatorium*, and the construction of a timber *apodyterium* (Seitz 1999 67-70). Furthermore, a similarity to the *apodyterium* at Walldürn was noted (Seitz 1999, 67). There is some ambiguity to the dating of this phase. The previous phase III was deemed to have begun no earlier than the beginning of the third century. As for more concise dating for phase IV, the latest coin from the sequence is a denarius of Maximinus Thrax from 235-236, found in the backfill of room E3 of period IVb (Seitz 1999, 83-84). The presence of Rheinzabern Bernhard group IIIa and rätische Ware push the dating in the second third of the third century, but a *terminus post quem* of 235 is as accurate as possible a date for this building period. This means that the evidence from the bath house, while probable, should not be seen as conclusive.

Other parts of the settlement did show conclusive evidence for construction activity during the period. High survival rates of timber structures in the settlement led to a more precise dendrochronological dating to be used in later building phases which would normally be ambiguous without coin dating (Greiner 2008). While the end of building phase 2b was dated by the presence of a charred beam from well 9 in the settlement to 239 +/- 10, the end of building phase 2c is dated from the presence of wooden offcuts that were found in the fill of

wells 9 and 13, with a felling date between October 253 and April 254 (Greiner 2008, 40). The wells were filled with burnt material over the fill containing the dated wooden objects (Greiner 2008, 44). Afterwards, the upper levels of wells 10 and 13 were expanded with new wooden planks, which unfortunately did not have a dendrochronological date (Greiner 2008, 46). The expansion of these two wells, however, is the latest confirmable evidence of construction and/or repair of features in the settlement.

As with Walldürn and Jagsthausen, the latest evidence for construction at both Weißenburg and Pfünz comes from their extramural bath houses. After the bath house at Weißenburg was demolished sometime during the second third of the third century, a construction over *praefurnia* in rooms 15 and 17 was erected. This consisted of a clay-bonded *opus spicatum* wall, which was made almost entirely out of building material from the *frigidarium* room 14 (Visy 1988, 125).

Finally, in the latest building phase of the bath house at Pfünz, the *tepidarium* and *apodyterium* were combined and the extra doorways walled up (Winkelmann 1903, 135-136). The presence of Germanic ceramics underneath the building debris led Reuter (2007, 191-192) to suggest a Germanic resettlement of at least the bath house sometime in the third century. It is important to note, however, that the structure could have been standing for a considerable period of time, and while Reuter's conclusion is certainly in the realm of possibilities, it is also likely that the structure could have stood for a long period of time before collapsing.⁷⁹ Furthermore, there is little stratigraphic or material proof to accurately date this latest period of construction in the bath house.

4.8.2 Conclusions

Strikingly, almost all the evidence for construction and repair in extramural settlements comes from the bath houses. This could be due in large part to forts being the focus of investigation, as they tend to be the most visible feature in the landscape. The bath houses, usually being large structures themselves, are often the most visible feature after forts. Certain changes in the architecture of the bath houses do appear in more than one instance. The most notable of these being the replacement of tile hypocaust piles with those made out of more readily-available, but less-fire resistant sandstone as seen at Walldürn and Jagsthausen, and the

⁷⁹ Structural features from Roman sites, even in frontier settings are known to survive into the modern period, despite almost two millennia of neglect. Indeed, the bath house at Ravenglass in West Cumbria is still largely standing to this day (Blood and Pearson 2004; Hahn 2015). Closer to Pfünz, excavation of the extramural bath house at Miltenberg-Altstadt found that the structure was intensively used in the medieval period by evidence of finds in and around the building (Beckmann 2004, 47).

erection of timber *apodyterium* structures at Walldürn and Rainau-Buch.⁸⁰ ‘Late’ construction and also reduction in size of bath houses in the region have been identified by Scholz (2002; 2006, 87-119; 2018). He argues that while the upkeep and repair of bath houses is perhaps one of the key indicators of a maintained Roman way of life in the region, the use of unsuited materials such as sandstone, and the repurposing and blocking of other features might indicate a lack of commodities and infrastructure to maintain them in traditional ways (Scholz 2009, 152-154).⁸¹ Further, he states that as these changes were ‘doubtless irreversible: those making them had by then already abandoned hope in sustainable improvement or the recuperation of former conditions’ (Scholz 2018, 153). Whether or not the abandonment of hope or a pragmatic shift in use of space is the cause remains to be determined.

Outside of the evidence from the bath houses, it is only in the case of Zugmantel, where a clear stratigraphic sequence shows a new cellar cutting into the fill of a previous one. Furthermore, it is largely based on dendrochronological dating that the latest phases of construction were perceived at Osterburken and Rainau-Buch with accuracy. Ultimately, these additional features outside of bath houses at extramural sites in the region would imply a continuation in occupation and construction of like previous periods. Admittedly, however, the dataset is too small to make any generalizations with accuracy.

4.9 Demolition at extramural settlements

In total, seven extramural settlements displayed evidence for demolition. (*fig. 4.8*). Often, the activity of demolition noted is also tied into the evidence for construction. Four of the sites, Zugmantel, Saalburg, Obernburg am Main, and Jagsthausen were in *Germania Superior*, with Rainau-Buch and Weißenburg in *Raetia*. The evidence largely follows the same pattern as that for construction and repair.

⁸⁰ A timber *apodyterium* was also noted in the later construction of the bath house at Miltenberg-Altstadt, though it is not dated more closely than ‘period two’ (Beckmann 2004, 47).

⁸¹ Scholz (2018) sites numerous examples, such as the baths at Osterburken (Batz 1977; 1988; Kortüm 2005) as evidence, which are unfortunately not fully published. He also gives as potential evidence from Zugmantel, Saalburg, Kapersburg, Holzhausen, and Schirenhof, however clearly states that the excavated material is not strong enough to place it firmly in the mid-third century (Scholz 2018, 153-154)

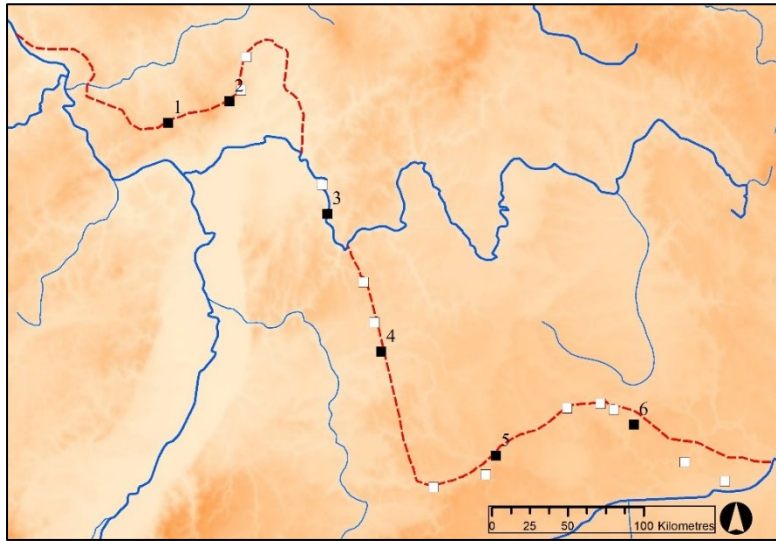


Figure 4. 8: Demolition at extramural settlements in Southwest Germany.

1. Zugmantel 2. Saalburg 3. Obernburg am Main 4. Jagsthausen 5. Rainau-Buch 6. Weißenbug

4.9.1 Evidence for demolition at extramural settlements

At the extramural settlement at Zugmantel, the demolition and backfilling of cellar 322 was dated to sometime after 247-249 based on numismatic evidence (Sommer 1988, 527).

Likewise, at Saalburg, the final phases of activity in the extramural settlement included the backfilling of the cellars associated with houses in the extramural settlement (Moneta 2010, 160). It is unclear, however, if the final phase occurred in the mid-third century or just before it, as the latest coin from the extramural settlement comes from the bath house, rather than the strip houses. This creates a disconnect between the latest phaseable stratigraphy and the latest datable find.

A well from the northern end of the extramural settlement at Obernburg am Main contained three fills, the second of which contained a deer skeleton with six-point antlers, ceramic fragments, and a bone hairpin.⁸² The upper fill contained carbonized wood that included fragments of carvings of deities, as well as a complete altar to Jupiter, and the sculptural figure from the top of a Jupiter column. (Reis 2008, 91).⁸³ Reis (2008, 96) dated this activity to the second third of the third century, claiming it to be evidence of a Germanic raid, likely from 233, but left the final dating open-ended. However, after the well was backfilled, many features on the site were intentionally backfilled and levelled over. The result of all these activities led to a conclusion of a ritual closing of the site, said to be associated with the events surrounding *Limesfall* in 259-260 (Reis 2008, 97).

⁸² See section 5.10.1 for discussion of deer antlers in well.

⁸³ While the deposition of Jupiter columns in the backfill of wells has been associated with the mid-third century in Southwest Germany (discussed in section 5.4.2), it is also a phenomenon that continues to occur in the Rhineland in the fourth century (Noelke 2006, 308-320).

Much of the extramural settlement at Jagsthausen appears to have gone out of use by the early third century after the strip houses all seem to have burnt down in a fire (Thiel 2005, 228). However, dating of individual structures was deemed impossible as almost all finds from the settlement come from unstratified contexts (Thiel 2005, 129). At some point after the strip houses had burnt down, the area was intentionally backfilled and levelled over. Furthermore, the presence of cremation graves and metalworking debris on top of the levelling layer led to the interpretation that large sections of the site were still in use in the mid-third century despite the lack of strip houses (Thiel 2005, 228). The epigraphic evidence from the northern bath house would also seem to confirm this (Thiel 1995; 2005, 48; see section 4.8.1). Although a general date to the early third century may be given to the actual destruction of the strip houses, the dating of the demolition and later activity remains an open question and may have taken place in the mid-third century.

There is ample evidence for intentional demolition at Rainau-Buch in the mid-third century, due to the dendrochronological dating of wooden features at the site. Wells 1, 7, 9, and 13 were all backfilled and sealed with fire debris sometime after 254 based on dendrochronological dating from the site (Greiner 2008, 46). In addition, the cellars in the site were backfilled and levelled over after a large fire. Of interest in this phase was the backfill of cellar 10 with specially adapted sherds of pottery, which was interpreted as a deliberate action on behalf of the occupants (Greiner 2008, 47).

Reuter (2007, 97) states that there is evidence for 'late' demolition in the extramural settlement at Weißenburg based on evidence from interim reports. Although wells were found in the settlement that were backfilled with parts of two different Jupiter columns, it was not possible to determine whether the deposition of the columns and the backfilling of the wells took place in the Roman or post-Roman period (Dinkelmeyer et al 1988, 118). Additionally, cellars of strip houses excavated in the extramural settlement were found to have been backfilled with building material after demolition (Klein 1989, 118-120). The latest datable piece of material culture in the backfill was a coin of Severus Alexander (Klein 1989). Importantly, however, it is critical that no other dating evidence was given in the interim concerning the wells. While the backfilling of the cellars in the extramural settlements may indeed have taken place sometime during the mid-third century, the lack of information on any other potential finds besides the single coin mean that this conclusion must remain conjecture.

4.9.2 Conclusions

In sum, the evidence from demolition at extramural settlements is slight at best. The backfilling of cellars and levelling of sites is associated with the final phases of all six of the extramural settlements. However, outside of the coin dated features at Zugmantel and the dendrochronologically-dated features at Rainau-Buch, all the activity is possibly mid-third century, but not conclusive. Furthermore, the well fills with Jupiter columns at Obernburg am Main and Weißenburg may well fit within the larger picture of deposition, but the caution of Reis (2008) to place the deposition past 233 is telling. Therefore, the only conclusive evidence must be relegated to Zugmantel and Rainau-Buch.

4.10 Destruction at extramural settlements

In total, there are eight sites that contained evidence for destruction (*fig. 4.9*). None of them showed evidence of human remains in the destruction layers. Four sites showed destruction layers across the entire site, Zugmantel, Butzbach and Stockstadt am Main in *Germania Superior*, and Rainau-Buch in *Raetia*. Sites with partial destruction layers include Obernburg am Main and Walldürn in *Germania Superior*, and Theilenhofen and Pfünz in *Raetia*.

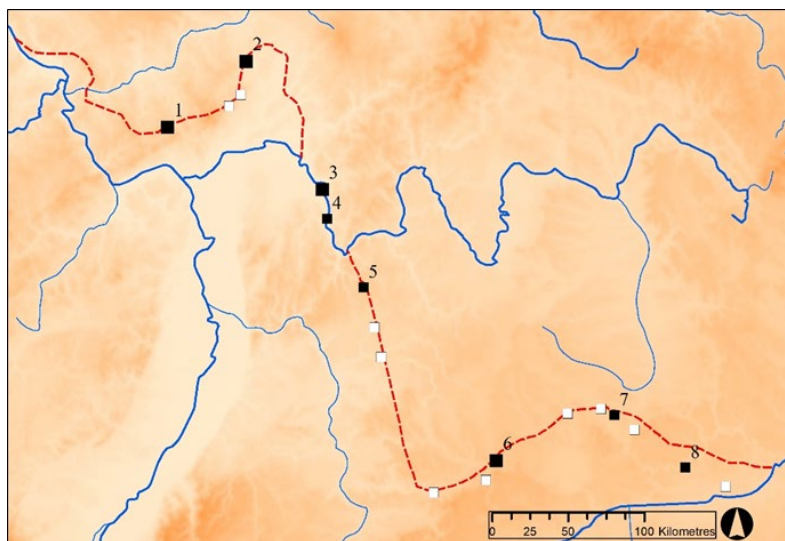


Figure 4. 9: Destruction at extramural settlements in Southwest Germany. Key: Large black square – Burning layer across entire site; Small black square – Burning layer across partial site

1. Zugmantel 2. Butzbach 3. Stockstadt am Main 4. Obernburg am Main 5. Walldürn 6. Rainau-Buch 7. Theilenhofen 8. Pfünz

4.10.1 Evidence for destruction at extramural settlements

While the entire extramural settlement at Zugmantel was destroyed by fire sometime after 253-254 based on numismatic evidence, Sommer (1988, 526-527) ultimately leaves the possibility open that the site-wide destruction may have taken place as late as 259-260.

The possibility of two to three destruction horizons marked by fire debris both in the extramural settlement and inside the fort at Butzbach led to difficulty in interpretation of the

final phases of the site (Müller 1968, 15). The presence of late ceramics, however, indicated that the final destruction layer occurred sometime in the mid-third century, with Müller (1968, 19) giving the traditional date of 259-260.

There is no direct dating evidence from the extramural settlement at Stockstadt am Main. The high volume of fire debris found in the excavated cellars of strip houses led to a conclusion that the entire settlement was destroyed by fire, stating it suffered a contemporary fate with the fort (Conrady and Wirth 1910, 34).

At Obernburg am Main, the find of a badly burned sherd of Julius II-Julianus I Rheinzabern Ware was interpreted as evidence for a destruction in fire of at least part of the extramural settlement (Teichner 1990, 195). The lack of Urmitzer Ware and late Niederbieber forms led to the conclusion that the settlement was abandoned likely in 233, tying it to the Alemannic raid of the same year (Teichner 1990, 207). Later excavations of the *beneficiarius* station found that the precinct was destroyed by a fire sometime in the 230s-240s based on the ceramic assemblage (Steidl 2005, 91). Although Steidl admits that the assemblage could stretch into the 240s, he also tied the destruction of this part of the extramural settlement to 233 (Steidl 2005, 92).

The extramural bath house at Walldürn was destroyed in a fire sometime after 248 based on coin finds (Batz 1978, 88). Further evidence for a complete destruction of the complex was the presence of burnt roof tiles in the destruction layer, leading Batz (1978, 89) to conclude that the roof trusses must have been come down during the fire.

Fire destruction was found across the extramural settlement at Rainau-Buch, dated to after 254 based on dendrochronological dating evidence (Greiner 2008, 44). While there was evidence for activity after this destruction layer, the finds associated with this later activity suggest the site was not occupied for long (Greiner 2008, 46-47). Additionally, the extramural bath house was destroyed in a fire in its final phase (Seitz 1999, 84). This is only noted as occurring sometime after construction period III, which was given a *terminus post quem* of 235 based on coin finds (Seitz 1999, 83).

Reuter (2007, 93) claims that the burial of two Roman military helmets at the extramural settlement of Theilenhofen must have post-dated the destruction in fire of a house in the extramural settlement due to their lack of fire patina, and thus possibly mid-third century. However, the only dating criteria associated with the sequence was a sestertius of Commodus dated to 189 (Klumbach and Wamser 1976-1977, 44), making this evidence tenuous at best. Further, antiquarian excavations from 1820 noted that the extramural bath house was

destroyed in a fire, but no dating criteria is given (Eidam 1905, 2). Metal detector finds of a Germanic spearhead and barb also led Reuter (2007, 92-93) to suggest a possible end due to Germanic attack. These finds are not fully published, and it is not stated if they were associated with any perceptible destruction deposits.⁸⁴

At Pfünz, the final site with evidence for destruction, Reuter (2007, 101) noted that the high amount of burning layers and intact vessels in the extramural settlement implied a violent destruction, with his identification of a triangular Germanic spearhead (Winkelmann 1901, 40, nr. 2, taf. XV 44) used as further proof. While the end of the settlement has historically been tied to the so-called Dolichenus hoard with a closing date of 232 (Winkelmann 1901, 65; see section 4.5.1), the possibility is left open that the destruction of the rest of the extramural settlement took place later. Unfortunately, however, there is currently no material evidence to concretely put the end of the settlement in the mid-third century.

4.10.2 Conclusions

In review, the evidence for mid-third century destruction at extramural settlements leaves much to be desired. Datable material from Zugmantel, Butzbach, Walldürn, and Rainau-Buch show conclusively that destruction at those sites occurred in the mid-third century, though not necessarily in conjunction with the prescribed *Limesfall* date of 259-260. Furthermore, the settlements at Obernburg am Main, Stockstadt am Main, and Pfünz all suffered some form of destruction at the end of their occupation. Destruction of the settlement at Obernburg am Main may have taken place at or before 233, but even by the admission of the excavators, there is a likelihood that the life of the settlement extended into the mid-third century. The only truly questionable site is Theilenhofen, where the latest dated find in the sequence is a sestertius of Commodus.

While the sites in *Raetia* admittedly lack wholesale evidence for sustained existence after the Germanic raid proposed by Reuter (2007) in 254, there evidence for minor construction works above the burning layer at Rainau-Buch suggest some activity post this date. Further, it must be stated again that the destruction of a settlement, let alone a single building or complex in fire does not mean that its end was at the hand of violence. As stated in section 3.6.1, fire can be due to neglect, freak accident, or even intentional at the hands of the occupants. Although it may be enticing to attribute the presence of destruction layers to violence, it is near impossible to prove in most cases via the archaeological record.

⁸⁴ Reuter (2007, 92-93) also states that the finds were initially misidentified as Medieval, however, reidentifies them as being Germanic in nature.

4.11 Hoarding at extramural settlements

Six sites displayed evidence for hoarding during the survey period (*fig. 4.10*). Zugmantel is the only site with both a monetary and a material hoard. Walldürn, Rainau-Buch, and Weißenburg contained material hoards, and Gunzenhausen and Kösching coin hoards.

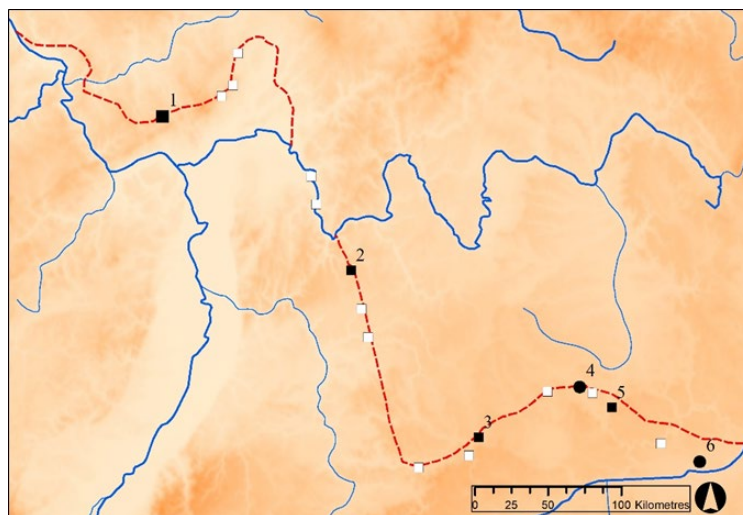


Figure 4. 10: Hoarding at extramural settlements in Southwest Germany. Key: Black square – Monetary; Circle – Material.

1. Zugmantel 2. Walldürn 3. Rainau-Buch 4. Gunzenhausen 5. Weißenburg 6. Kösching

4.11.1 Evidence for hoarding at extramural settlements

At Zugmantel, a hoard of 140 silver coins ranging in date from Septimius Severus to Trajan Decius was found in pit 309 of the extramural settlement, with a closing date of 251-253 (Sommer 1988, 526-527). The coins were found in a heap at the bottom of the pit covered by fire debris, all but two of the earliest issues showing little to no wear (FMRD V 1266). No container was noted. In addition, ca. 40 iron objects were deposited in the bottom of well 460, including a *spatha*, spearheads, copperworking tools, horseshoes, construction tools, kitchen tools, bowls, and nails (Fischer 1999, 39, nr. 87; Pietsch 1983).

At Walldürn, a small deposit of iron objects was found in the top of the destruction layer of the extramural bath house, though some objects displayed evidence of burning as well (Batz 1978, 89). In addition, two metal hoards were found in pits dug in stone buildings in the extramural settlement (Weinrich-Kemkes 1993). One was a collection of four bronze vessels, and the other an assortment of iron objects, including two braziers, candelabrum, handles, two axes, a bowl, and other objects. Though Fischer (1999, 38, nr. 73-74) dates these hoards to the second half of the third century, Weinrich-Kemkes (1993, 305) is clear in stating that the associated finds with the hoards would imply a deposition sometime in the second third of the third century. She seems to have split the difference, as the iron hoard was deemed to be

deposited sometime after the beginning of the third century, while the bronze vessels typologically dated to the first half of the third century (Weinrich-Kemkes 1993, 278, 294). Further, she states that the bronze vessels were likely deposited in the second half of the third century due to the deposition associated with the destruction of a nearby wall (Weinrich-Kemkes 1993, 305).

In addition to these deposits, Fischer also includes a random find of five iron objects including two spearheads found some 30m north of the northeast corner tower of the fort (Fischer 1999, 38, nr. 75). Schallmayer (1985, 209) dated these to the middle of the third century based on the iron hoard found in the fort at Künzing. This dating, however, is suspect. The iron hoard from Künzing was demonstrated by Okamura (1984, 217) to have little stratigraphic relation to anything that could date it to the end of the site, let alone its final destruction layer. Furthermore, the excavator admitted that the hoard could range in date from the reign of Commodus to Severus Alexander (Schönburger 1975, 114). Thus, while it can be safely asserted that the iron deposit from the bath house is from the mid-third century, the two material hoards from within the stone buildings are probably from the mid-third century. Their deposition in the second half of the third century is dubious, despite the assertions of Fischer.

Three material deposits are known from backfilled wells at Rainau-Buch. At the bottom of well 7, 36 pieces of bronze and iron objects were found including tools, agricultural instruments, door fittings, cooking vessels, and statuettes (Planck 1979; Weinrich-Kemkes 1993, 301, nr. 15b). At the bottom of well 9 were a bronze infantry helmet, iron chain mail, and a wooden figure (Planck 1979; Weinrich-Kemkes 1993, 301, nr. 15c). At the bottom of well 13, twelve bronze and iron pieces were found, including cooking implements, bronze vessels, and weighing scales (Planck 1979, Weinrich-Kemkes 1993, 301, nr. 15d). While Planck (1979) initially attributed these depositions to an 'Alamanneneinfall' in the mid-third century, the dendrochronological dates associated with these wells (Greiner 2008, 44) would seem to place their deposition sometime in the mid-third century prior to 254, perhaps bringing them into alignment with Reuter's (2007) destruction of the 254 hypothesis.

At Gunzenhausen, a coin hoard of 310 silver coins ranging in date from the reign of Commodus and ending with a coin of Gordian III dated to 241-243 was found some 470m east of the fort (Kellner 1953). While the initial find was discovered during building works, the hoard was not completed until an additional 58 coins came to light in 1958 (FMRD I 5057). Though the hoard does appear to be complete, the nature of the find at two different times, years apart from one another raises questions about whether the different elements

belong to a single assemblage. Reuter (2007, 92) states that the hoard comes from a 'later' context, however the full details of the find have not been published. Thus it is not possible to discern the elements of its deposition. While Kellner (1953) was prone to tie the closing date of the hoard to the end of the fort, Okamura (1990, 48) rightly cautions that without context, these two events should not be tied together.

Perhaps the best-known hoard from Southwest Germany is the so-called temple hoard from the extramural settlement at Weißenburg, discovered in 1979 by chance when someone was digging up their asparagus bed some 70m south of the bath house (Kellner and Zahlhaas 1993). This led to emergency excavations by the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, which ended up finding a large assortment of over 150 items purportedly packed in a large box and buried. These included 20 bronze statuettes, eleven silver votive sheets, 20 bronze vessels, four pieces from parade helmets, a folding stool, *lamas*, bridle fittings, iron kitchen implements, a tripod, a hearth shovel, horse and wagon fittings, weighing scales, and woodworking tools (Kellner and Zahlhaas 1993, 5-9).

Due to the large number of votive items in this assemblage, Kellner and Zahlhaas (1993, 144-146) interpreted the hoard as coming from a temple. They stated that while an exact date for deposition could not be given, it must have occurred in the first half of the third century, in response to Germanic incursions (Kellner and Zahlhaas 1993, 146). The hoard has been the subject of debate, however. Künzl (1996) chose to see it not as a temple inventory deposited for safekeeping, but instead a Germanic treasure hoard due to the inclusion of iron objects and the parade helmets. This is not unlike the interpretation for the other famous hoards at Neupotz and Hagenbach (Künzl 1993; Bernhard et al. 1990). Most recently, however, Donderer (2004) has taken a more cautious approach, stating that the heterogenous mix of objects could also be interpreted as an itinerant merchant's wares. Furthermore, he states that without context and datable material, the association with *Limesfall* is both tenuous and not imperative for interpreting the hoard (Donderer 2004, 242-244). Indeed, this may be another case of enticement to tie the hoard with supposed historic events.

The final example is a coin hoard from the extramural settlement at Kösching. The hoard consisted of 240 denarii ranging in date from the reign of Commodus in 190 to Gordian III with a closing date of 241 (FMRD I 1115). The hoard was discovered during the demolition of a building some 125m east of the southeast corner tower of the fort in 1933, perhaps originally in a bag and hidden in a hypocaust system (Reineke 1934). Kellner (1953) initially wanted to use the hoard at Gunzenhausen as well as Kösching as evidence for a collapse of the frontier in *Raetia* under Gordian III, but this ignored the hoard from inside the fort at

Weißenburg, which has a closing date of 251 (FMRD I 5100). While Okamura (1990) cautioned against this interpretation, he nonetheless attributed it to a cavalryman burying his savings before leaving for the Persian War of Gordian III. Although Okamura is right in cautioning the use of two hoards to map out the collapse of an entire frontier system, it appears that his interpretation has fallen into a similar trap of trying to tie the deposition to an unknown.

4.11.2 Conclusions

Fischer's (1999) appraisal that material hoards in the region can be shown most clearly in the examples from extramural settlements comes into doubt. The site with the largest number of material hoards, Walldürn, shows that the dating of deposition is questionable, with much of the evidence pointing to a long period for deposition. The hoards from the wells at Rainau-Buch may indeed be linked to the end of the settlement, but it would be difficult to attribute their deposition to anticipation of a barbarian raid without further evidence of the latter from the settlement or the fort. Likewise, the hoard from Weißenburg has been called into question for some time, with Donderer (2004) raising serious issues about the dating and interpretation of the deposition. Furthermore, the monetary hoarding evidence leaves little for interpretation. While all three examples were completely recovered, there is currently ample evidence to suggest that the *Raetian* sector of the frontier was not destroyed nor abandoned in 241 as per the suggestion of Kellner (1953).

4.12 Conclusion

In concluding this review of military sites, it is important to reflect on the nature of the evidence between fort and extramural settlement. When looking at the data for military sites, there are only eight instances where there is overlap of evidence from both the forts and the extramural settlements (*tab. 4.1*). These are limited to the Taunus/Wetterau region with Zugmantel, Butzbach and the single exception of Stockstadt on the Main stretch of the *Germania Superior limes*, and at Theilenhofen, Weißenburg, and Pfünz in *Raetia*. Furthermore, the area where there is the most overlap is destruction, at Butzbach and Stockstadt am Main in *Germania Superior* and Rainau-Buch, Theilenhofen, and Pfünz in *Raetia*. Indeed, evidence for destruction is the most common element across all sites, with 29 instances over the 59 different military sites. The only instance where this was noted in the extramural settlement but not the fort was at Zugmantel.

Site Name	Construction/Repair	Demolition	Destruction	Hoarding
<i>Military sites in Germania Superior</i>				
Niederbieber				
Niederberg				
Arzbach				
Bad Ems				
Marienfels				
Hunzel				
Holzhausen				
Kemel				
Zugmantel				
Heftrich				
Kleiner Feldberg				
Saalburg				
Kapersburg				
Langenhain				
Butzbach				
Friedberg				
Arnsburg				
Inheiden				
Echzell				
Ober-Florstadt				
Altenstadt				
Markoebel				
Gross-Krotzenburg				
Seligenstadt				
Stockstadt				
Niedernberg				
Obernburg am Main				
Woerth				
Miltenberg-Altstadt				
Miltenberg-Ost				
Haselburg				
Wallduern				
Osterburken				
Jagsthausen				
Oehringen				
Mainhardt				
Murrhardt				
Welzheim				
Lorch				
<i>Military sites in Raetia</i>				
Schirenhof				
Unterboeblingen				
Aalen				
Rainau-Buch				
Halheim				
Ruffenhofen				
Dambach				
Gnotzheim				
Gunzenhausen				
Theilenhofen				
Weissenburg				
Ellingen				
Burgsalach				
Boehming				
Pfuenz				
Koesching				
Pfoerring				

Table 4. 1: Mid-third century activity at military sites in Southwest Germany. Light grey – fort activity; Dark grey – extramural settlement activity; Black – Fort and extramural settlement activity,

The lack of overlap between forts and extramural settlements could be argued to be due to two factors. First, is that extramural settlements may have fallen out of use before the forts themselves. While this phenomenon is common in frontier regions that outlast the third century, and a similar pattern may have emerged in Southwest Germany, but is masked by the *Limesfall* narrative. Second, the extramural settlement has historically been an afterthought in excavation reports, with general commentary on their size and structure being the main elements of the described in the report. While research strategies have evolved, there are leftovers of this sentiment in the region. Even in the case of towns that superseded forts and extramural settlements, the fort itself will tend to be the focus of investigation. Therefore, due to these two factors, the forts still enjoy an emphasis over extramural settlements and any following towns. As discussed in section 2.2.2, the regional narrative for *Limesfall* is driven almost entirely by military sites, so it would now be pertinent to examine how established theories hold up to the evidence.

Because it is difficult, if not in many cases impossible to precisely date mid-third century activity, only general conclusions can be identified. What is clear, is that a wholesale, uniform abandonment of the frontier region is unlikely. Though Mathisen (2011) and Fischer (1999) have still abided by this interpretation, the evidence from military sites is too piecemeal to support it. Sites that show clear, deliberate evidence of hostile action, such as Niederbieber, Osterburken, Weißenburg, and Pfünz are few and far between, spread across the range of the frontier. Furthermore, the dating on the final destruction at Pfünz is unclear and may have taken place considerably earlier than the others. The evidence for this as well is contained to the forts themselves, with little to indicate that the extramural settlements at these or other sites were the victims of deliberate destruction.

Conversely, the idea that the frontier was gradually depopulated of troops, perhaps for wars on the eastern frontier of the Empire during the period has been put forward by Strobel (1999) and more recently by Reuter (1996; 2015) and Scholz (2018). The change in interior space of forts at Saalburg and Butzbach, and the noted reduction of occupied space at Kapersburg and Miltenburg-Ost may indeed be a result of this. Modifications or repurposing of bath houses in the extramural settlements of Walldürn, Jagsthausen, Rainau-Buch, Weißenburg, and Pfünz may indicate this as well. While there is a possibility of a change in bath house activity at Saalburg and Kapersburg, and the erection of a bath house inside the fort at Miltenburg-Ost, the evidence does not match up on a site by site basis with the fort complex and the extramural settlement. What is clear, however, is that there is a pragmatic shift in the repurposing of and use of space as the mid-third century progresses, likely continuing into the

late 250s and perhaps beyond, at least in the case of *Germania Superior*. Further, that there is evidence for the construction of new features in both forts and extramural settlements would indicate that there was not a wholesale decision to depart from the frontier. Demolition evidence both inside the forts and in extramural settlements was tied to the backfilling of cellars and the levelling of previously destroyed buildings, suggesting an intention to continue use of the site.

This leads then to the question of the end of the frontier, and whether or not it was occupied after the traditional end dates. Reuter (2007; 2012, 316-317; 2015) dated the end of *Raetian* sector of the *limes* to a barbarian raid in Spring 254. There are no known cases of coins from excavation surpassing this date. Furthermore, the dendrochronological dating of the latest wells in the extramural settlement at Rainau-Buch would seem to support this. However, there has been repeated caution and warning about using coin dating to date events in the mid-third century (Noeske 1996; Kortüm 1996: 38-44; Heising 2008, 99-109; Witschel 2011, 40-44; Mayer-Reppert 2011; Heising 2012, 153-155; Konrad 2015). Noted burning levels were admittedly found in all but one of the excavated forts on the *Raetian* frontier, but were limited at extramural settlements, appearing only at Rainau-Buch, Theilenhofen and Pfünz. There is also no evidence of skeletal remains in destruction layers on the *Raetian* frontier except at Weißenburg and Pfünz. While skeletal remains need not be present, their absence is notable. Likewise, the presence of Germanic spearheads is noted at a small handful of sites, but in a frontier zone this is arguably not enough evidence to attribute the destruction solely to Germanic raiding parties, or any other group for that matter.

As for *Germania Superior*, there has been debate if the evidence now points to reduced garrisons holding on at sites beyond the traditional date of 259/260. Heeren (2016) has argued for reoccupation based on a reassessment of a selection of small finds and ceramics, and the idea has recently also been given weight by Witschel (1999, 348; 2011), Fleer (2011), and Reuter (2012; 2015). Reuter (2012, 320) for his part states that whatever the case, the forts appeared to be no longer manned by regular Roman units. Ultimately, the disparate nature of the evidence across the *Germania Superior* stretch of the frontier makes this difficult to determine with accuracy, and like *Raetia*, there is little stratigraphic evidence to suggest occupation after the 260s. Given the state of archaeological evidence, it is difficult to suggest a uniform end to military sites in the region. Ultimately, a reworking of the ceramic material and its relation, if possible, to the stratigraphy would be necessary on a site by site basis to further expand interpretation. Due to the antiquated nature of many of the excavations, this already difficult task may ultimately prove impossible.

5. Civilian Sites in Southwest Germany

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the evidence for activity at military sites during the survey period. Though most of the data was from excavations conducted before the development of modern techniques, general conclusions about military sites were able to be reached, namely that there was no uniform withdrawal, abandonment, or destruction perceptible in the archaeological record to support a *Limesfall* narrative, and that the frontier went through a period of transition visible in the changes of use of occupied space both within and outside of the forts. This chapter evaluates the evidence from civilian settlements, including seventeen towns and eighteen rural settlements. Generally, data fares somewhat better as most of it comes from modern excavation. Thus, it is through towns, like Frankfurt-Heddernheim and Groß-Gerau, and rural sites, like Wurmlingen and Groß-Gerau Kelsterbach where the data for mid-third century activity is much more detailed. Though this allows a more nuanced view of the period, both towns and rural sites have largely been absent from the narrative. Only a few small studies on the end of Roman towns in the region exist that employ modern data (Reis 2010, 271-274; Heising 2014; Konrad 2015), while there are virtually no studies that synthesize the excavated data from rural sites in the mid-third century. The regional narrative is still led by the data from military sites, despite the higher-resolution data from civilian sites. Unfortunately, in many cases, this has furthered the use of real or perceived historic events in interpretation of the data from towns. In contrast, this chapter will show that the overall image from both towns and rural settlements is one of gradual decline over the over an extended period rather than of sudden destruction and abandonment. Both settlement types will be looked at separately and given their own conclusions.

The most striking exemption in the survey may be the towns at Heldenbergen in the Wetterau, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, and Walheim in the Odenwald further south. Despite being important third century sites, the authors of the reports for Heldenbergen and Walheim concluded that both sites had gone out of use by the end of the first third of the third century (Czysz 2003, 180-193; Kortüm 2004, 466-467).⁸⁵ While there is numismatic evidence from

⁸⁵ The sites met very different ends, however. The extramural settlement at Heldenbergen is one of the few sites where there is clear evidence of widespread violence in its ending sequence, with numerous human skeletons showing trauma associated with a burning layer across the site littered with weapons. Walheim, on the other hand, appears to have been abandoned with no clear sign of struggle.

Bad Cannstatt, as well as a possible mid-third century funerary monument, there is little published information on the Roman town.⁸⁶

5.2 Towns in the mid-third century

The prospect of high-resolution data from excavations from a number of towns means that an in-depth examination of the data is crucial for understanding the latest phases of Roman occupation. While ceramic studies and detailed stratigraphic recording have advanced considerably, there is still a reliance on coin dating in most circumstances to give a definitive *terminus post quem* for mid-third century activity. This is even more apparent for the final activity in Roman phases of occupation.

In total, seventeen towns were noted to have evidence for mid-third century activity (*fig. 5.1*). These included the *municipium* at Rottweil, the *civitas* capitals at Wiesbaden, Frakfurt-Heddernheim, Dieburg, Ladenburg, Bad Wimpfen, Baden-Baden, and Rottenbug, as well as the towns at Groß-Gerau, Köngen, Pforzheim, Sulz am Neckar, Riegel am Kaiserstuhl, Faimingen, Heidenheim, Nassenfels and Munningen.

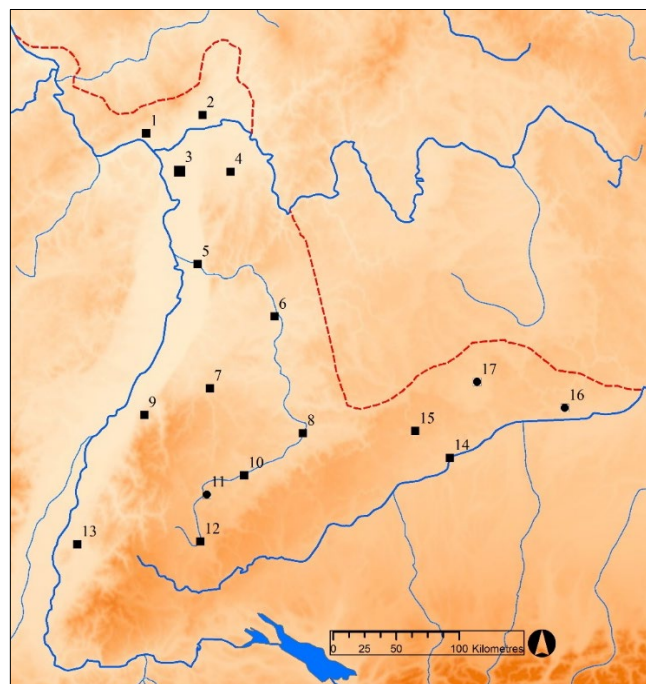


Figure 5. 1: Datable material at towns in Southwest Germany. Key: Small black square – Sites with ceramic dating; Large black square – Sites with dendrochronological dating; Circle – Sites with numismatic dating

1. Wiesbaden 2. Heddernheim 3. Groß-Gerau 4. Dieburg 5. Ladenburg 6. Bad Wimpfen 7. Pforzheim 8. Köngen 9. Baden-Baden 10. Rottenburg 11. Sulz am Neckar 12. Rottweil 13. Riegel am Kaiserstuhl 14. Faimingen 15. Heidenheim 16. Nassenfels 17. Munningen

⁸⁶ The funerary monument from Bad Cannstatt depicts a *cataphractus*, initially thought to date from the reign of Severus Alexander (Goeßler 1931). Reuter (2015) and Scheuerbrandt (2006) state that the monument could even be Aurelianic. No discussion is given as to why or how an elaborately-carved funerary monument would end up in an area that is otherwise argued to be overrun or depopulated.

5.2.1 Towns with ceramic dating to the first half of the third century

The two towns with ceramic dating to the first half of the third century are Ladenburg in *Germania Superior* and Faimingen in *Raetia*. While there has been no definitive publication of the Roman ceramics from Ladenburg, both Baatz (1962) and Kaiser and Sommer (1994) note that the assemblage supports a date to the first half of the third century. This is further bolstered by the latest coin find in excavation of Roman contexts being an antoninianus of Philip dated to 246 (Kaiser and Sommer 1994, 305). The latest epigraphic evidence from the site is slightly later, a milestone dated to 253 (CIL XIII 9013=CIL XVII, 2 635; RSOR 089).

Published investigations at Faimingen have been limited to the temple of Apollo-Granus, and this may indeed skew the dating criteria for the town. The presence of a few sherds of Bernhard Group IIIa-b Rheinzabern Ware suggested that the temple precinct might have lasted past the first third of the third century, but unfortunately none of them came from clear contexts (Eingartner et al. 1993, 64). Likewise, an antoninianus of Gordian III dated to 243-244 was found in excavation but came from the fill of a medieval/early modern period cellar (Eingartner et al. 1993, 187).

5.2.2 Towns with ceramic dating to the second third of the third century

The nine towns with ceramic dating to the second third of the third century are Wiesbaden, Dieburg, Bad-Wimpfen, Pforzheim, Köngen, Baden-Baden, Rottenburg, Rottweil, and Heidenheim. Like Ladenburg, Wiesbaden does not have a fully-published ceramic profile. However, syntheses of the archaeological work on the town have noted that while the ceramic profile indicates that a stark drop in the quantity after the end of the Roman period, there is evidence for continued occupation through to the fourth century (Schoppa 1974; Czysz 1994, 186). The coin profile for the town extends without a break into the fourth century (Schoppa 1974, 90; Czysz 1994, 214). This should not be seen as abnormal, however, as the town sits at the edge of the survey region, in an area which would have had more sustained contact with the Roman population on the other side of the river. The latest epigraphic date from the town is a Viergottenstein, the base of a Jupiter column dated to 246 (CIL XIII 7272).

The presence of eleven sherds of Rheinzabern potter Primitivus and nineteen of Rheinzabern potter Julius II/Julianus I led to the conclusion that Dieburg lasted until 260 (Schallmayer 2018, 131, 323). Although it is clear that a ceramic assemblage should not be used to tie historic events to site development, Schallmayer (2018, 131) ties the end of site into the *Limesfall* narrative. The two latest coin finds from excavation at Dieburg were issues of

Maximinus Thrax from 236, with no-mid third century coinage to bolster the ceramic dating (Schallmayer 2018, 111).

While a monograph on the Roman ceramics from Bad Wimpfen does exist, there is no discussion whatsoever about the assemblage or its implications for supply and dating of the Roman town (Czysz et al. 1981). The work focuses mainly on methodology of collection and cataloguing (Czysz et al. 1981, 15-19). The implications of the ceramic assemblage, though, are that it indicates the settlement lasted into the mid-third century (Czysz et al. 1981, Planck et al. 1988). However, a reworking of the materials may cast more light on the situation. The latest known coin from Bad Wimpfen are two coins of Philip dated 244-249 (FMRD NII 4279 E, 18-19).

A high distribution of Bernhard Group IIIa at 30% and Group IIIb at 8% of the overall Rheinzabern assemblage led to the conclusion that Roman Pforzheim lasted into the first half of the third century (Kortüm 1995, 86). Unfortunately, there is no mid-third century coinage known from excavation, with the latest datable coin from the settlement being a denarius of Maximinus Thrax (Kortüm 1995, 90). A 'later antoninianus' was found in the lowest debris layer of cellar III in excavation, but nothing more is known about the coin (Kortüm 1995, 90). The latest epigraphic evidence is a milestone known from nearby at Frizolheim, dated to 244-247 (CIL XVII, 2 653; AE 1935, 104). While there is a lack of numismatic evidence, the high percentage of Bernhard Group III Rheinzabern in the assemblage, combined with the nearby milestone suggests activity into the mid-third century.

Only 5% of the Rheinzabern assemblage from Köngen consisted of Bernhard group III, with 48 sherds coming from IIIa, twelve from group IIIb, and two from group IIIc, leading to a date range up to the first half of the third century (Luik 1998, 154). This conclusion was strengthened by the discovery of a Niederbieber 6a dish and a Martin-Kilcher 56 profile group G amphora, both dated to the first half of the third century, in the backfill of cellar 1390 (Luik 1996, 79). The backfill of cellar 1527 contained a Niederbieber 13 vessel and a Bernhard 5b variant of a Ludovici type Tb dish, both dated to the first half of the third century as well (Luik 1996, 82). The latest coins from excavation come from a hoard initially found in a ceramic pot, containing 615 coins with the latest identifiable coin being an antoninianus of Philip dated 246 (FMRD NII 4135/1).

Moving east, though the baths at Baden-Baden are well known, the ceramic and numismatic evidence from the Roman town suffers from a lack of known findspots (Riedel 1982). Consequently, the ceramic evidence is not well published. However, Riedel (1979, 299)

stated that based on the evidence, most activity at Baden-Baden seems to have ceased in the 240s, and that the coin profile bolsters this assumption. The latest known coin from Baden-Baden is an antoninianus of Volusian dated 251-253 (FMRD II 2195 nr. 168).

Bernhard group III only made up 9.4% of the entire Rheinzabern assemblage from Rottenburg, with eight sherds from group IIIa and five from group IIIb (Gaubatz-Sattler 1999, 320). This led to the conclusion that the settlement went through little to no economic growth in the first half of the third century, pointing to an end to the settlement near the end of the second quarter of the century (Gaubatz-Sattler 1999, 406-407). The latest coin found in excavation was an issue of Philip from 245 (Gairhos 2008, 92). Indeed, no coins after the reign of Philip come from confirmed findspots (Gaubatz-Sattler 1999, 704).

At Rottweil, the presence of Bernhard group IIIa-b Rheinzabern Ware in the fill material in the cellar of building K of a row of strip houses, as well as the adjacent street led to the conclusion that the town was occupied into the middle of the third century, but a more precise date could not be assigned (Klee 1986, 36). Later excavations of building M also found four sherds of a burnt Dragendorff 37 vessel with the stamp of Rheinzabern potter Victor I, leading to similar conclusions as the excavation of the strip houses (Lauber 2013, 59-60).

Furthermore, it has been noted that while there was mid-third century activity at the site, overall finds show a downturn in activity and importance throughout the third century (Planck 1975a, 159; Sommer 1992, 307-309). The latest period coin associated with the town is an antoninianus of Tetricus I dated 270-274 (FMRD II N3204 A1, nr. 148).

There are very few finds from the later periods of Roman occupation at Heidenheim. Sölch (2001, 122) has blamed this not on a lack of activity, but on later medieval truncation of Roman features. Regardless of the cause, only four sherds of Bernhard group IIIa and one sherd of Bernhard group IIIc are known from entire Rheinzabern assemblage of 232 sherds (Sölch 2001, 116-118). The latest coin known from the site is an antoninianus of Trajan Decius dated 249-251 (FMRD II 4183 nr. 115). Though the evidence is paltry, it would still suggest activity.

5.2.3 Towns with ceramic dating to the final third of the third century

The three towns with ceramic dating to the final third of the third century are Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Groß-Gerau, and Riegel am Kaiserstuhl. Mid-third century activity at Groß-Gerau is further confirmed by dendrochronology.

While the latest ceramic forms from Frankfurt-Heddernheim date to the final third of the third century, the latest sealed context was the so-called 'Dendrophorenkeller' (Reis 2010, 170). In

the backfill of the cellar, an antoninianus of Gallienus dated 258-259 was found stuck to an altar dedicated by the town's *dendrophori* (Fischer and Schleiermacher 1962). Along with other ceramics, sherds of Bernhard group IIIa-c Rheinzabern Ware, a sherd from a Dragendorff 43 vessel, sherds of either a Niederbieber 32 or 33 beaker, and sherds from dishes produced in the Urmitzer style all dated to the middle of the third century or slightly later (Fasold 1994). The latest-dated inscription from Frankfurt-Heddernheim is an altar dedicated to Mithras, dated to 245 (CIL XIII 7370; CIMRM 1100=1202).

The ceramic assemblage from Groß-Gerau was found to last until the end of the third century based primarily on the sherd of a *terra nigra* Alzey 25 vessel in the backfill of a stone cellar associated with the strip houses in parallel B 15 (Wenzel 2009, 149). This dating was bolstered by the presence of Urmitzer Ware found in the backfill of well 2 (Wenzel 2009, 153-154). Furthermore, the Rheinzabern assemblage consisted of 24.04% of Bernhard group III. There were 55 sherds of IIIa, 13 sherds of IIIb, and 8 sherds of IIIc (Hanel 2010, 38). The latest period coin from the site was an antoninianus of Tetricus I dated 270-274 (Wenzel 2009, 118). In addition to the ceramic and numismatic dating, a dendrochronological date from a beam in period IIIb well 2 had a felling date of 274/248, further showing conclusive proof of mid-third century activity (Wenzel 2009, 131-132).

Riegel am Kaiserstuhl is a rare example of a town in the region that has clear evidence of continuous occupation into the fourth century (Steger 1994, 271-276). The most compelling evidence comes from the excavation of the town's *mithraeum*. Mid-third century activity was confirmed by the excavator based on the find of five sherds of Bernhard group IIIa Rheinzabern ware and a Loeschke type 10 Samian lamp (Mayer-Reppert 2007, 344, 353). Evidence for later activity was found in layers above the *mithraeum*, including sherds of Brown painted Ware and a two Loeschke type dishes with parallels from the Barbara baths at Trier (Mayer-Reppert 2007, 353). The latest period coin associated with Riegel is an antoninianus of Aurelian dated 270-275 (FMRD II 2058 nr. 203).

5.2.4 Towns without ceramic dating

The final three sites do not have any published mid-third century ceramic information, however, there are associated coin finds. The latest coin found in excavation at Sulz am Neckar was a denarius of Gordian III dated 238-244 (Müller 1974, 491). Although very little is known about the latest phases of Roman occupation at Nassenfels, the latest-provenanced coin is an antoninianus of Valerian dated to 257 (Eschbaumer 1986, 133; FMRD I 5037, nr. 172). Likewise, little is known about the end of Roman Munningen, but the latest coin from the town is an antoninianus of Philip dated 244-249 (Baatz 1974, 120; FMRD I 7333, nr. 39).

All the towns in the survey at least have some material evidence for mid-third century activity. While the lack of publication on the ceramics at Wiesbaden, Ladenburg, and Baden-Baden mean that assessment of the assemblage must be taken at the word of the excavators, numismatic, and in the cases of Wiesbaden and Ladenburg epigraphic evidence also reinforces the conclusion. The rest of the sites with published ceramic evidence all imply that there is secure evidence, at least in the material assemblage, for mid-third century activity. Both Sulz and Munningen do not have any published ceramic evidence for the mid-third century, but the presence of mid-third century coinage from sealed Roman contexts make activity probable. Without more information, further conclusions are not possible. Likewise, almost no published information on Nassenfels past the early third century is available. While mid-third century coinage is associated with the site, it has not come from excavation. Therefore, there can be little confidence in stating mid-third century activity.

5.3 Construction at towns

Seven towns in the survey area showed evidence for construction and/or repair during the mid-third century (fig 5.2). These were Wiesbaden, Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Groß-Gerau, Baden-Baden, Rottenburg, and Sulz am Neckar, all of which are in *Germania Superior*. Faimingen was the sole town in *Raetia*.

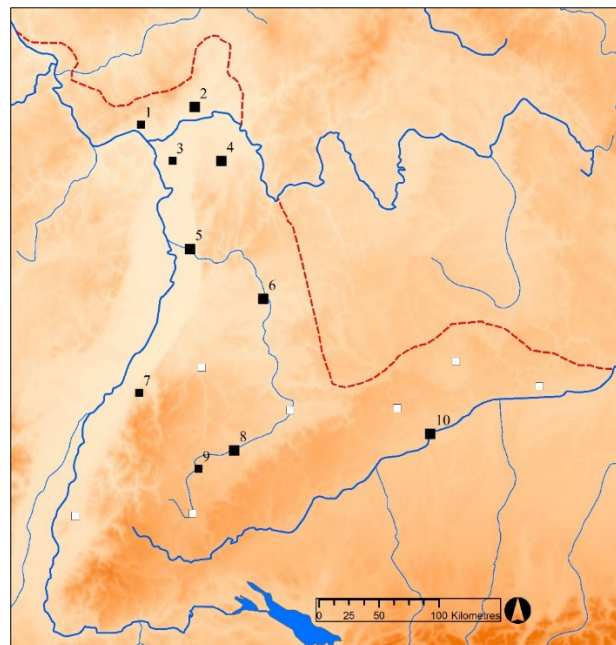


Figure 5. 2: Construction at towns in Southwest Germany. Key: Small black square – Sites with construction and/or repair Large black square – Sites with town walls and/or construction/repair

1. Wiesbaden 2. Frankfurt-Heddernheim 3. Groß-Gerau 4. Dieburg 5. Ladenburg 6. Bad Wimpfen 7. Baden-Baden 8. Rottenburg 9. Sulz am Neckar 10. Faimingen

5.3.1 Evidence for construction at towns

The main evidence for construction at Wiesbaden came from the excavations of the town's *mithraeum* by Helmut Schoppa. A sealed 30cm thick carbonized layer was found on the floor bordering wall IV of the structure, containing a coin of Gallienus dated 260-268 (Czysz 1994, 133). Some 40cm above the floor which was sealed by the carbonized layer, a new Roman floor level was constructed, though this is not dated (Czysz 1994, 133). However, Czysz (1994, 145) also states that after the fire in the *mithraeum*, the walls and altars were highly visible and thus easily spoliated. These two statements appear to contradict each other, and it must be asked how much later the spoliation must have happened if a new floor layer within the building was established. Czysz (1994 214) also notes the construction of new buildings on top of a destruction level dated to 260 associated with the Roman bath complex at Kranzplatz, but gives no further information. Further investigation of this material would help to expand the understanding of the very late phases of Roman activity in the region, especially as the numismatic of Wiesbaden extends fully into the fourth century (Czysz 1994, 214). Unfortunately, this must remain speculation at present.

Frankfurt-Heddernheim perhaps displays the most concrete evidence for construction in the mid-third century. The erection of a large hall structure over the foundations of houses B-D, which were destroyed in a fire sometime in the first half of the third century (Fischer et al. 1998, 420-421). A concentrated quantity of *militaria* from within the large hall led to speculation that it might have been a storage depot associated with the military (Fischer et al. 1998, 430; Reis 2010, 172).

Evidence from Groß-Gerau is very slight, but conclusive. Beams from the construction of well 2 from construction period IIIb were dendrochronologically dated to have a felling date of 247/248, extending the date range of the construction period from around 210 to the middle of the third century (Wenzel 2009, 131-132, 154).

As noted in section 5.2.2, the stratigraphic evidence at Baden-Baden is very limited. However, the excavation of a number of buildings interpreted as an administrative district did purport to find evidence of mid-third century activity. Building II in the precinct saw a significant reorganization of its internal space (Knierriem 1996). The partial destruction and abandonment of the structure in the second quarter of the third century was followed by the construction of a drystone support wall in the southeast corner of the building (Knierriem 1996, 70-72). Although it was concluded that the building stayed in use until the end of the Roman period, no finds are listed in the report to substantiate the findings.

At Rottenburg, bath complex 1 was still in use into the mid-third century based on two coins of Gordian III found in excavation dated to 241-243 and 243-244 (Gaubatz-Sattler 1999, 407). The latter of the two was found in the *caldriaum*, which was still in use. While this is not direct evidence of construction or repair, it is included as conclusive evidence of use of the building.

The town at Sulz am Neckar was destroyed by fire sometime during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and not repopulated after. However, sporadic occupation of the site in the mid-third century was noted by the erection of drystone structures on top of the foundations of earlier buildings. Coins of Severus Alexander, Maximinus Thrax, and Gordian III were found within excavation of the structures (Müller 1974, 490-491). While the numismatic evidence on its own gives a *terminus post quem* for the abandonment of the structures, it is entirely possible that occupation occurred later. The lack of additional finds leaves this open to conjecture.

Though not fully published and technically undated, in the very latest phases of Roman occupation at Faimingen, the erection of what appears to be a stone fort in the southeast corner was noted (Rüsch 1972; Sommer 2014, 58). Speculation has been that the fort was constructed under Gallienus, based on parallels for the lack of corner towers at Ras Al-Ein in Tunisia (Scholz 2009, 471-472). There is no stratigraphic evidence to confirm this. Sommer (2014, 58) does state the existence of a building inscription from post-262 found in a church nearby at Hausen ob Lonthal (CIL XIII 5933; Eck 2012, 82-83) may be enticing, but that caution should be taken in associating the two. Therefore, while the presence of this installation in the latest phases of occupation would imply some sort of military activity on the site, not much more can be said about its chronology or purpose. Sommer (2014, 57) argues that the new fortification may have been manned by a vexillation of the third Augustan Legion, based on an inscription from *Gemellae* in Algeria that states the return of such a vexillation in 253. He states that this would have been part of a new defensive line along the *Raetian* frontier, as the third Augustan stood against Gordian III, subsequently being disbanded upon his ascension. He argues that this unit was sent to the *Raetian* frontier as a form of punishment (Sommer 2014). Although all the finds from Burgsalach are firmly second century in date, it has been architecturally dated based on parallels in North Africa (Schleiermacher 1962; Schlafitzl 2011; Peuser 2016). Sommer (2014, 71), however, concludes that without any physical evidence from the sites themselves, this conclusion can only be purely speculative.

5.3.2 Town walls in Southwest Germany; a mid-third century phenomenon?

Before moving on, the construction of town walls in the region should be discussed. Six towns, all *civitas* capitals, were surrounded by town walls, with most evidence pointing to an erection sometime in the first half of the third century (Heising 2014, 338). The sites with town walls are Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Dieburg, Ladenburg, Bad Wimpfen, Rottenburg, and Faimingen (*fig. 5.2*). The dating criteria for the wall constructions at Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Dieburg, and Rottenburg are fairly secure, but the remaining three are open to interpretation.

The town walls of Frankfurt-Heddernheim seem to have been erected in stone in the first quarter of the third century, partially based on a dendrochronological date of 210 +/-10 (Wenzel 2000 46). However, the sterile fill of the fortification ditch, which appeared to have been maintained, led to the conclusion that the wall lasted for at least a few decades in its role as a protective barrier. Stone robbing did not seem to take place in the Roman period, but only well into the high Middle Ages (Wenzel 2000, 47). Though based purely on ceramics dating, the construction of the walls at Dieburg were dated based on their overlying a cellar with a ceramic assemblage similar to the depot from the extramural settlement at Langenhain (Schallmayer 2010, 114-119). The construction of the walls at Rottenburg likely took place sometime after 230 based on the ceramic assemblage from pit 5, which underlies the wall (Gairhos 2008, 87). However, one section of the wall may have been constructed earlier. Cellar 86 was backfilled sometime after 186 based on a coin find, underlaid tower gate 93 in the wall, leading to the conclusion that the area was either exposed for some time, or this section of wall dated significantly earlier than the rest (Gairhos 2008, 87).

Though lacking in dating evidence, the walls at Ladenburg and Bad Wimpfen were given a wide chronology from the late second to the first half of the third century (Baatz 1962, 16; Rabold 2005; Filtzinger et al. 1986, 219-220). Construction of the stone town wall at Faimingen, also lacking in published evidence, is dated to the early third century (Czysz el al. 1995, 443-444). The presence of these walls and their erection in the third century is largely missing from the discussion of the region, with no mention at all by Witschel (1999, 338-361; 2012), though discussion in the past decade has included them. Heising (2008, 119-123; 2014, 338) and Reuter (2012, 314; 2015) both state that it is unclear as to whether the walls were constructed in response to perceived barbarian threat, or as a feature of civic investiture. Konrad (2015) favours an interpretation of civic work, stating that their uniform construction and incorporation of intricate design elements should be taken as proof. However, Konrad's (2015) interpretation is based on an incorrect assumption that the dating evidence points to a

construction date for town walls in the region in the last quarter of the second century.⁸⁷ Furthermore, construction on the town walls of Mainz, just outside the survey area, began at the earliest in 253, despite the relative security of being adjacent to the legionary fortress of the *XXII Primigenia* (Heising 2008, 157-169; Heising 2012, 166-167). While a survey of the construction of town walls in the Western Empire ultimately concluded that the construction of town walls in the Principate were largely for ornamental purposes, the examples from Southwest Germany must still be seen within the context of external threat (Esmonde Cleary 2003, 79-84). Ultimately, without clear epigraphic evidence, the reason for construction of the town walls in Southwest Germany must still remain open to speculation. However, their erection, along with the further evidence for construction in the region must indicate that in the mid-third century, that the provincial authorities were not looking to abandon the region.

5.3.3 Conclusions

A distillation of the evidence for mid-third century construction at towns in Southwest Germany seems to imply that while the scale of investment and development seen in earlier periods may not have been the same, there perhaps was no intention of abandoning the population centres wholesale. It is always important to remember that in most cases, a modern urban centre overlies the ancient remains, making large scale excavation difficult. Likewise, heavy truncation of ancient features by later intrusion makes interpretation, especially of the latest phases, difficult (Heising 2014, 337). Evidence from the *mithraea* at Wiesbaden and Riegel, as well as new construction at the bathing complex at Wiesbaden and sustained use of the full complex at Rottenburg is compelling. It suggests that while the third century progressed, at least some aspects of civic life continued to be sustained. Indeed, the drystone structures over the abandoned ruins of Sulz am Neckar shows importance, at least in one case, of former Roman towns in the mid-third century.

On the other hand, the large hall construction over a former residential area at Frankfurt-Heddernheim and the apparent construction of a fortification in the southeast corner at Faimingen might indicate a changing use of civic space towards military function in the mid-third century. This should not be seen as entirely out of place, as both towns are close to the military frontier of the region. However, the dating of Faimingen is an open question. While Sommer (2014, 57) argues for a mid-third century date for the fortification, it could also be

⁸⁷ Kortüm (2015) in the same volume, notes the controversy surrounding the dating of town walls in the region. He attributes the construction of walls at Dieburg and Rottenburg to a response to the Alemannic raids of 233, assigning them a third century dating. Esmonde Cleary (2003, 76) assigns the dating of town walls in the region to the late second century, however, this is largely based on the preliminary information listed in survey texts of the region. He also notes that their construction reflects the military presence in the region.

seen within context of Late Antique fortifications known from other former towns in the region. The so-called Heidenmauer at Wiesbaden and the small river fortification on the Neckar at Ladenburg, both Valentinianic in date are clear examples of Roman military occupation in the region in the Late Antique period (Czysz 1994, 220-224; Heukemes 1981). Further, after the abandonment of the *mithraeum* at Riegel in the mid-fourth century, the site was deemed to take on a militaristic character (Mayer-Reppert 2007, 394). Finally, the construction of the fortified settlement at Breisach-Münsterberg in the last quarter of the third century provides a more contemporary example of the erection of a civil-military settlement, though in a *de novo* context (Blöck and Zagermann 2018). The evidence for construction, both of structures and of town walls, suggests that there was no abrupt collapse of town life, but rather a slow decline.

5.4 Demolition at towns

Arguably the most compelling evidence for mid-third century activity at towns comes from demolition (*fig. 5.3*). Eight sites were found to show evidence of demolition. The phenomenon of backfilling of cellars and wells, and levelling of demolished structures has been noted as the last perceptible sign of activity at many Roman sites in the region (Reis 2010, 271-274). The investigation of these features is therefore important to discern some of the latest perceptible Roman activity in the region.

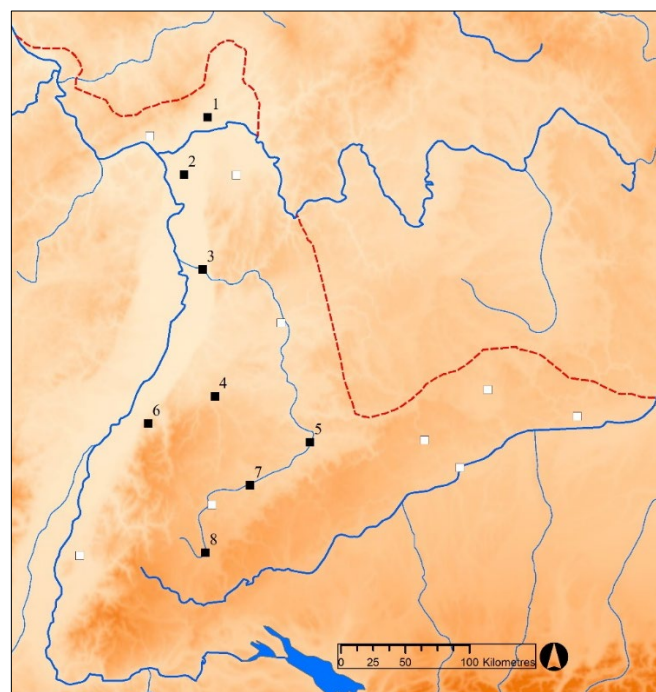


Figure 5. 3: Demolition at towns in Southwest Germany

1. Frankfurt-Heddernheim 2. Groß-Gerau 3. Ladenburg 4. Pforzheim 5. Köngen 6. Baden-Baden 7. Rottenburg 8. Rottweil

5.4.1 Evidence for demolition at towns

Most of the mid-third century activity at Frankfurt-Heddernheim is characterized by the levelling of features and the backfilling of cellars and wells, however the latest Roman activity is largely truncated by later intrusion (Fischer 1973, 227; Reis 2010, 274). In the Roman town, houses B-D were abandoned sometime in the first half of the third century, and their cellars are then backfilled with rubbish including ceramics, metal waste, and fire debris (Fischer et al. 1998, 420-421). Wells were also backfilled and taken out of commission, including wells 3 and 9, which contained human skull fragments, and well 19, which contained a large quantity of Urmitzer Ware, a spearhead, sword handle, and part of a spur. (Reis 2010, 34-36). Wells 5 and 40 also contained human skull fragments, and well 20 contained fragments of demolished Jupiter columns, but these features were not securely dated to the mid-third century (Reis 2010, 34-36, 67-68, 80-81).

More grizzly discoveries came from well 35/150, which included the skeletons of an adult male and female in their 20s, as well as an infant (Hampel 2001; Reis 2010, 71). In addition to the human skeletons, the fill also included architecture fragments, ceramics, bronze toiletry items, an iron chisel, wooden bowls, and the remains of three cows, two pigs, a sheep, a horse, three cats, and a dog, though not contemporaneous with the human remains (Hampel 2001, 216-217). A *terminus post quem* of 210 is given for the filling of the well based on dendrochronological dating of wooden planks found underneath Planum 1 (Hampel 2001, 215). No more secure dating for the fill was given. Additionally, the lower fill of a well at Frankfurt-Schwanheim contained part of a sandstone statue of a bull (Müller and Lange 1975, 316). Higher fills contained both cow horns and deer antlers, as well as the remains of cow, deer, wild boar, goat, sheep, cats, and dogs (Müller and Lange 1975, 320). Finally, the skeleton of a young adult male from the Eastern Mediterranean was found, killed by a sword blow, and placed in a concentrated layer of stone, followed by a pointed iron object (Müller and Lange 1975, 316). Large quantities of Urmitzer Ware were found in all the fills, leading to a mid-third century date for the backfill (Müller and Lange 1975, 317; Reis 2010, 265). The rest of the site associated with the well at Frankfurt-Schwanheim was notably devoid of Urmitzer Ware, with the latest dated find being a coin of Severus Alexander dated to 222-228 (Faber et al. 2000, 143). This may suggest that whatever event took place at the well happened somewhat later than the abandonment of the structure, or perhaps rubbish from the site was dumped into the well as successive stages of deposition. The evidence at Frankfurt-Heddernheim is varied and Reis (2010, 166) rightly says that each instance of human remains in the wells at the site should be taken separately. However, he implies that their deposition into the wells is very likely the result of some sort of attack. There is little evidence for

destruction, let alone violent action at the site in the mid-third century, outside of the well at Frankfurt-Schwanheim.

Similar to Frankfurt-Heddernheim, the latest period activity at Groß-Gerau is characterized by the backfilling of cellars (Bef. 137, 149, 161-167, 300/380, and 2756), which were filled with the structural remains and fire debris of the buildings above them (Wenzel 2009, 111). In addition, the backfill of well 2 from period IIIb must have taken place sometime after the felling date of 247/248 of timbers used in the construction of the well (see section 5.3.1). The fill of this well, as well as the backfill of cellar 49 contained large amounts of Urmitzer Ware (Wenzel 2009, 153).

Excavations at Ladenburg found that the latest dated feature in the Roman period was the backfill of cellar 838 with fire debris from the structure on top of it (Kaiser and Sommer 1994, 173). The excavators concluded that Roman activity must have continued on the site, as the backfilling was seen as a deliberate action (Kaiser and Sommer 1994, 173). The fill, which contained ceramics and *militaria*, was dated to after 246 based on a coin find (Kaiser and Sommer 1994, 173; Schmidts 2004, 85). Additionally, a well is known from the site that contained mid-third century ceramics in its backfill as well as two human skeletons with skull injuries (Sommer 1998, 177-179). A well containing a Jupiter column that was supposedly deposited twice is also known at Ladenburg (Sommer 1998, 177-179; Heukemes 1975). After being thrown in a well supposedly in 233, the column was recovered and repaired, before it was deposited again (Heukemes 1975). Though giving no evidence for the dating of the well, Heukemes (1975, 40) states that the column was finally deposited and the well backfilled in 260, this improbable explanation is clearly offered to tie the deposition to the *Limesfall* narrative.

Evidence for demolition at Pforzheim also comes from the backfilling of wells. Wells 1, 3, 4, 5, and 8 all contained human skeletal remains, representing a total between nine and fourteen individuals (Wahl 1991, 523; Kortüm 1995, 59). Wells 1 and 8 contained evidence for skeletal remains of more than one individual, while the rest contained remains of multiple individuals (Wahl 1991, 523). The backfilling of these wells as initially dated to the 'Alamannenstrum' of the mid-third century based on the find of the remains of a total of fourteen individuals in two wells at Regensburg-Harting (Alt 1992; Schweissing 2009; Schnetz 2013). Later analysis of the ceramic evidence in the fills, however, confirmed the dating of backfilling to the mid-third century (Kortüm 1995, 92-93). A number of the skeletal remains showed evidence of gnawing marks from animals, implying that the remains were exposed above ground for some time (Wahl 1991, 525; Kortüm 1995, 93). In addition, wells

1,3, and 4 also contained depositions of iron objects in their fills (Kortüm 1995, 92-93). Well 1 included eighteen agricultural and stone working tools, well 3 contained a few iron stone working tools, and well 4 contained some 300 pieces of iron objects of various function, as well as a bronze statue of *Victoria* in the uppermost fill (Kortüm 1995, 56-60). Kortüm interpreted the deposition of at least the collection of objects in well 4 as an intentional deposition by a metalworker, hiding recyclable material for later deposition (Kortüm 1995, 93). The presence of animal skeletons in the fill were also considered to be evidence for poisoning the water supply of the town, since none of the remains contained gnaw marks like the human remains.

Following the destruction of the settlement, Kortüm (1995, 93) states that sedimentation buildup including the remains of the town, filled the wells. Thus, the backfilling of the wells comes into question. If the deposition of the iron objects and the animal remains are taken at the interpretation of Kortüm, this would suggest that the wells were open and intentionally tampered with, and later deposition was a natural process. However, this still does not explain the human skeletal remains, at least some of which would have to have been intentionally deposited, perhaps in a general clearing exercise of the site. Ultimately, while Kortüm's (1995, 93) interpretation attempts to tie the fills into historical events, he admittedly states that it is entirely hypothetical.

At Köngen, the main evidence for period demolition comes from the backfilling of cellars 1390 and 1527 (Luik 2004). The backfill of cellar 1390 contained a large quantity of objects, included an overturned amphora, pottery sherds, small pieces of bronze, burnt shards of glass, and most notably a *spatha* (Luik 2004, 78). The stones of the cellar were burnt and the fill consisted of building debris, baked clay, and carbonized wood (Luik 2004, 77, 79). The ceramic finds ranged in date from the second to third century, but the presence of a Niederbeiber 6a dish and the amphora, identified as a Martin-Kilcher type 56G placed the dating of the backfill into the third century (Luik 2004, 79). Luik (2004, 78; 2005) further ties the backfill of the cellar to the end of the settlement based on the similarities of the *spatha* with the *militaria* hoard from Künzing.⁸⁸

Cellar 1527 contained a fill of tile fragments and carbonized wood. Ceramic finds, including a Dragendorff 33, a Niederbieber 13, and Bernhard 5b variant of a Ludovici Tb dish led to the conclusion that the cellar was backfilled at the end of the settlement (Luik 2004, 82). In addition to the two cellars, the final phases of a large *taberna* building may provide some

⁸⁸ For discussion on the problems of interpretation of the Künzing hoard as dating criteria see section 2.2.2.

evidence. Although the demolition of the building was not able to be dated confidently, final repairs on south wall 7 of the building took place sometime after 221 (Engels and Thiel 2016, 276). Sometime after this the building appears to have been intentionally abandoned, as the Roman backfill of the structure happened at a time when the walls were still at least half a metre above the ground level (Engels and Thiel 2016, 282-283).

As Baden-Baden is still not investigated on a large scale, the only evidence was the partial demolition of the administrative building in the mid-third century. The process consisted of the backfilling of the cellar, over which part of the outer wall collapsed before the erection of a drystone support wall (Knierriem 1996, 70-72).

At Rottenburg, the backfilling of earth cellar 4 was dated to the second quarter of the third century, while the backfill of earth cellar 5 was dated to the middle of the century (Gairhos 2008, 80). In addition, features 521, 523, and 524 consisted of a rubble levelling layer dated to the middle of the third century, and features 466 and 483 consisted of rubble levelling layers dated to the advanced third century (Gairhos 2008, 87). These were phased stratigraphically rather than with material culture, as no finds from the second half of the third century are known from excavation at Rottenburg (Gairhos 2008, 92).

The cellar of strip house building K at Rottweil was backfilled sometime between 220-260 based on the presence of Bernhard group IIIa-b in the fill, but a more precise date was not possible to extrapolate (Klee 1986, 36). However, the presence of Bernhard Group a-b does indicate that the backfilling of this cellar most likely occurred in the mid-third century.

5.4.2 Conclusions: wells, cellars, and the end of site activity

As is the case with extramural settlements, the evidence for demolition in towns during the period stems mainly from the backfilling of wells and cellars. While there is evidence of levelling off sites in the final phases of activity at Frankfurt-Heddernheim and Rottenburg, this is missing from the other six towns. Within the wells, the remains of Jupiter columns were found within the fills at Frankfurt-Heddernheim and Ladenburg, something also witnessed in the well fills at the extramural settlements of Obernburg am Main and Weißenburg (see section 4.9.1). The inclusion of human remains in wells at Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Ladenburg, and Pforzheim is also worth noting. Together, the examples of distinctive inclusions in wells suggest that further reflection on the composition of well depositions across the region would be useful.

The deposition of Jupiter columns in wells is a phenomenon that is known not only throughout Southwest Germany, but also in the Rhineland. While the examples in Southwest

Germany are usually dated to either 233 or 260 because scholars have commonly sought to fit their deposition into a narrative of historically attested incursions, examples outside the region have been identified in fourth century contexts as well (Noelke 2006; 2010-2011). At least 26 examples of deposition of at least parts of a Jupiter column in wells are known from Southwest Germany alone (Noelke 2006, 344-364). Traditional interpretation of the deposition of Jupiter columns in wells has been attributed to Alemannic raiding and destruction (Noelke 2006, 308-319; Noelke 2010-2011, 157-164). At least one example of deposition, however, from Heidelberg-Neuenheim, has been dated to the late second century, leading to doubt in the overall interpretation of the deposition pattern (Mayer-Reppert 2011; Konrad 2015). The deposition of the column at Heidelberg-Neuenheim came from a secure Roman context (Ludwig and Noelke 2009; Ludwig et al. 2010). This, combined with the fact that many times the columns are either missing the head or the entire effigy of Jupiter, and that the fill of the wells tends to also contain rubbish, has led to a recent interpretation of either closing ceremonies or the rejection of Roman authority by the local population (Konrad 2015). By Konrad's (2015) own admission, while this is a more plausible interpretation of the evidence, each instance should be taken on a case by case basis. Indeed, the double need of removal of a large monument and the sealing of a potentially dangerous abandoned well would also make sense in many contexts. Especially given that many times, only a *terminus post quem* is possible, later deposition should not be ruled out.

Furthermore, the prospect of a closing ritual should not be entirely ruled out. The defacing of objects, though notably a hoard of bronze vessels, has been interpreted as a closing ritual for a well in fourth century contexts in London (Gerrard 2009; 2011). It is this 'ritual killing' of the objects that is not dissimilar to the interpreted defacing of the Jupiter columns noted by Konrad (2015).

The presence of skeletal remains in the wells themselves is also a factor in the final backfilling. The practice has also been tied into the historical narrative of Alemannic raiding, largely based off of the finds at Regensburg-Harting, just east of the survey area (Alt 1992; Schweising 2009; Schnetz 2013, 55-58). While the remains at this site seem to have suffered blunt force trauma, scalping, and signs of cannibalism, the same has not been said for the examples from Southwest Germany. More complex factors are certainly involved in the examples of the family dumped into the Well at Frankfurt-Heddernheim (Hampel 2001), the victim laid out on a stone surface from the well at Frankfurt-Schwanheim (Faber et al. 2000) and possibly the wells in Ladenburg. The same cannot be said for the other period well fills in the region with evidence of human remains. The skull fragments in other well fills from

Frankfurt-Heddernheim and the animal-gnawed remains in the wells at Pforzheim may indicate that, at least in these examples, the deposition of remains were part of a larger process of site clearing. Though the high number of individuals present in the wells at Pforzheim imply some form of catastrophe, this need not necessarily be seen in conjunction with the deposition of the remains into the wells. Furthermore, the deposition of the body at Frankfurt-Schwanheim above a statue and in the middle of a stone fill may suggest something more ritualistic at work. Gerrard (*in press*) has addressed the evidence for human remains in wells in Roman Britain, which were historically seen as the work of raiding barbarians (Barker 1901, 286-289; Hornsby and Stanton 1912, 222-223). However, reappraisal of the evidence has seen the deposition as part of a larger process of closing of the well, as there are usually associated finds of metal hoards or animal remains (Gerrard *in press*; Poulton and Scott 1993, 119-120). Thus, Gerrard (*forthcoming*) suggests that these remains should be seen as errant burials rather than incontrovertible proof of nefarious activity. Martin-Kilcher (2007, 52-53), however, interprets the evidence of full or near-full skeletal remains from *Germania Superior* and *Raetia* in the mid-third century as evidence of some sort of attack where people were killed but does not rule out the potential for ritual significance.

In total, the evidence for demolition in towns is largely left open to interpretation. While it is clearly a deliberate act in all cases, the evidence centred around the backfilling of wells is almost exclusively tied into the historical narrative. With little clear evidence to tie this together, there is no single explanation for the evidence. A variety of factors, including preparation for new construction, site clearing, and indeed, ritual deposition are involved. However grisly some of the contexts may appear, it is also important to note that no distinct Germanic evidence is involved.

5.5 Destruction at towns

A total of seven towns displayed evidence for mid-third century destruction (*fig 5.4*). Six, Wiesbaden, Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Groß-Gerau, Ladenburg, Pforzheim, and Köngen were in *Germania Superior*, while Heidenheim was in *Raetia*. Notably, none of the sites display evidence for wholesale burning across the site. This could arguably be due to the sporadic nature of excavations of ancient towns in Southwest Germany, which are usually underneath modern settlements.

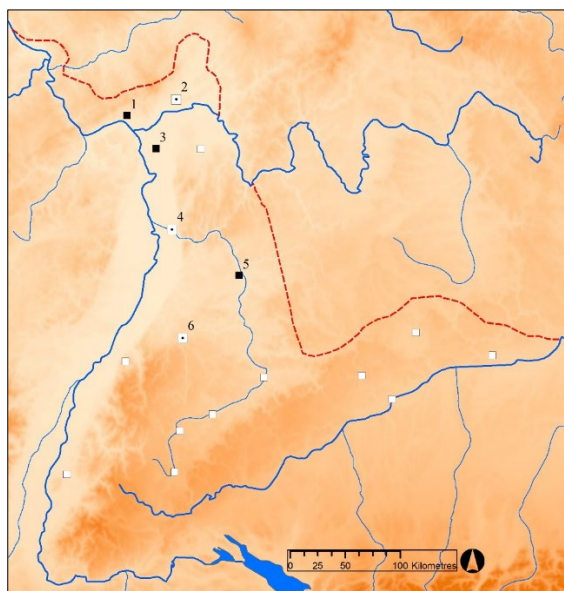


Figure 5. 4: Destruction at towns in Southwest Germany. Key: Black square – Burning layer across partial site; White square with dot – Burning layer across partial site with skeletal remains

1. Wiesbaden 2. Hedderheim 3. Groß-Gerau 4. Ladenbug 5. Pforzheim 6. Kõngen 7. Heidenheim

5.5.1 Evidence for destruction at towns

Multiple instances of burning were noted across Wiesbaden and attributed to Alemannic raiding in 260. The first was a 40-50cm thick burning layer dated by Schoppa to 260 in the Michelsburg area of the city, uncovered when the neighbourhood synagogue was destroyed in 1938 (Czys 1994, 39). The only noted find was a *terra nigra* vessel dated to the Hadrianic period and Czys (1994, 39) neither offers any other dating evidence, nor discounts Schoppa's interpretation. The *mithraeum* excavated by Schoppa also contained a 30cm thick carbonized layer, however this context included dated material to the mid-third century (Czys 1994, 133; see section 5.3.2). Likewise, destruction layers were noted in the vicinity of the bathing complex at the Kranzplatz (Czys 1994, 214). Notably, Schoppa (1974, 90) was hesitant to state the entire town went up in flames, as sections of it were left untouched. At the very least, the burning layers from within the *mithraeum* are from a sealed context that can be dated to the mid-third century. The burning layers in the Michelsburg and Kranzplatz areas may indeed have included material datable to the mid-third century, but they are unfortunately not listed, leaving the interpretation in doubt

Tracing the end of Roman activity at Frankfurt-Hedderheim difficult, as much of the site contains no clear evidence signifying the end of Roman occupation (Reis 2010, 267; Fischer 1973, 277; Fischer et al. 1998, 430). However, traces of burning were found on some of the ceramic evidence in the so-called Dendrophori cellar (Fasold 1994, 72). Notably, there was no fire debris found in the fill of the cellar, and the building above it did not appear to have

been destroyed in a fire. Though the burning may have been due to the presence of a hearth, the interpretation was left open (Fasold 1994, 72). Additionally, fire debris was present in fill of the stone cellars of houses B-D, but the debris was not uniform, suggesting that it came from elsewhere (Fischer et al 1998, 420-421). This leads to doubt that it had come from a destruction event. These features were dated to the first half of the third century (Fischer et al. 1998, 420). Besides these, the presence of individual fires is noted in the mid-third century, but not elaborated upon (Fischer 1973, 227). Frankfurt-Heddernheim is arguably the most intensively excavated town in Southwest Germany, and the absence of widespread destruction suggests that the settlement did not likely meet an abrupt end.

Buildings represented by features 49, 70, 341/361, and 2756 at Groß-Gerau burnt down in the last phases of Roman occupation of the site (Wenzel 2009, 111). Their associated cellars were backfilled with the fire debris from the structures, and the rest of the settlement was subsequently abandoned (Wenzel 2009, 111). This evidence, of course, does not on its own indicate that the settlement was destroyed as a result of hostile action.

At Ladenburg, the Kellerei excavations found that cellar 838 was filled with fire debris from building F, with a *terminus post quem* of 246 based on numismatic evidence (Kaiser and Sommer 1994, 277, 305). Buildings H-I in the excavation might have also burnt down, but the destruction deposit is not heterogenous with fire debris, leaving doubt with the excavators (Kaiser and Sommer 1994, 277). Furthermore, earlier excavations found a cellar that was filled with fire debris and unstamped roof tiles (Baatz 1962, 13). The destruction was dated to the first half of the third century based on ceramic finds, which unfortunately were not discussed outside of an amphora which appeared to be a Dressel 20 (Baatz 1962, 21). The *mithraeum* in the town also ended in a burning layer, however the dating criteria for it is not discussed (Sommer 1998, 177-179). At the very least, the destruction deposit associated with building F and cellar 838 and the possible destruction deposit from buildings H-I can be securely dated to the mid-third century.

The main evidence for destruction at Pforzheim came from the presence of burning layers with large quantities of burnt roof tile in the area of the modern city hospital (Kortüm 1995, 92). Only around 10% of the late fine ware ceramic assemblage showed evidence of being burnt as well, leading to a conclusion that the destruction in fire at the site was limited (Kortüm 1995, 92).

Modern excavations at Königen found evidence for mid-third century destruction in cellar 1390, the stone walls of which were badly burnt, and the backfill contained carbonized wood

(Luik 2004, 77, 79). The fill of cellar 1527 also contained carbonized wood (Luik 2004, 82). Antiquarian observations found that much of the site ended in burning layers and that subsequent excavations by the Landesdenkmalamt confirmed this (Luik 2004, 143). Despite a lack of published proof the entire Roman settlement ended in fire, Luik (2004, 143; 2005, 186) ties the end of the settlement into the supposed Alemannic raids of 260. Thus, this site represents another case where the historical narrative has been employed to interpret the end of occupation.

At Heidenheim, excavations in the town at Ploquetstraße found that in the latest phase of Roman occupation, one of the buildings appeared to be destroyed in an accidental fire. The excavator importantly avoided trying to assign the destruction to barbarian raids or deliberate action, suggesting its destruction may have been accidental (Rabold 1993, 1994).

5.5.2 Conclusions

The only evidence of human remains in the latest occupation phases of towns outside of cemeteries are limited to the finds in wells discussed in section 5.4.2. Consequently, there are no human remains associated with any of the destruction layers present in the mid-third century at any town sites. While a sword handle and a spearhead were found in the backfill of well 20 at Frankfurt-Heddernheim, a sword was found in the backfilling of cellar 838 in Ladenburg and another sword in cellar 1390 in Köngen, these are random finds not associated with any violence. Furthermore, it would be important at this point to look back at the example of Heldenbergen, where there is evidence of both catastrophic destruction in fire as well as the remains of armed combatants. Evidence like this is missing from the towns discussed in this thesis. However, scholars have attributed the remains in the wells at Pforzheim as evidence of a brutal assault on the town, using Heldenbergen as a direct parallel (Heising 2012, 343; Konrad 2015). Though it is not explicitly stated, it is tempting to think these conclusions were reached on the probable exposure of the remains prior to deposition. The large quantity of exposed skeletal remains along with rubbish deposits in the wells would imply site clearing after the fact, but without the clear proof of an instance such as the destruction of Heldenbergen, such conclusions are difficult to substantiate satisfactorily.

Save for the antiquarian observations at Köngen, the evidence for destruction in the towns of Southwest Germany are limited to a few isolated events. It would be impossible to rule out the agency of either raiding barbarians or the collateral damage of civil war (Heising 2012, 343; Konrad 2015). However, accidental fire is also a very real possibility (Witschel 2011, 34). Similar to the rest of the evidence from the region, the situation is likely a combination of all three factors.

5.6 Hoarding at towns

Evidence for hoarding was present at nine towns in the survey region (*fig. 5.5*). These included Wiesbaden, Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Ladenburg, Bad-Wimpfen, Pforzheim, Köngen, Baden-Baden, and Rottenburg in *Germania Superior* and Heidenheim in *Raetia*. All of the examples were monetary hoards except for Pforzheim and Heidenheim, where material hoards were present, and Ladenburg, where both a monetary and material hoard were present.

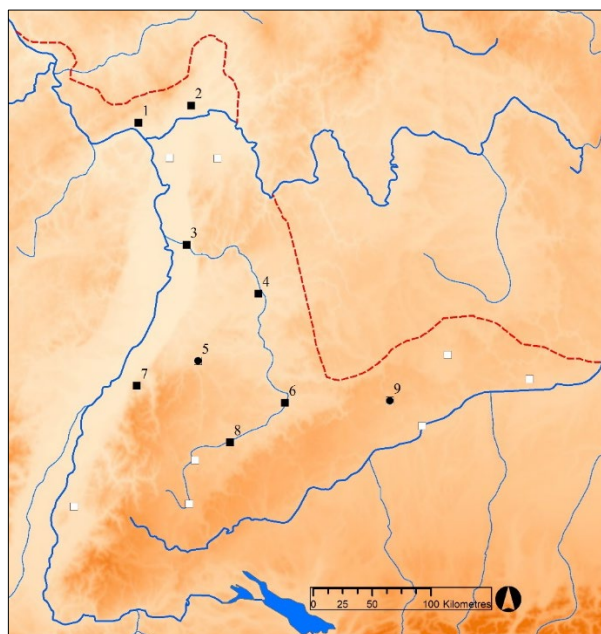


Figure 5. 5: Hoarding at towns in Southwest Germany. Key: Black square – Monetary hoards; Circle – Material hoards

1. Wiesbaden 2. Heddernheim 3. Ladenburg 4. Bad Wimpfen 5. Pforzheim 6. Köngen 7. Baden-Baden 8. Rottenburg 9. Heidenheim

5.6.1 Evidence for hoarding at towns

The monetary hoard Wiesbaden II, inventoried in a local museum in 1904, consisted of twelve coins ranging in date from 222 to 258, ending with a coin of Gallienus. All of the coins were antoniniani except for a denarius each of Severus Alexander and Maximinus Thrax. (FMRD V 1257). Findspot or context is unknown.

A period hoard from Frankfurt-Heddernheim at Niedereschbach was found in 2010 but remains unpublished (Hampel 2010). It contained 107 coins as well as a P-shaped brooch, a silver ring, and a gold ring and was found on the side of the Roman road in a small wooden box (Hampel 2010, 98). The hoard closed with a coin dated 253-259, and contained mostly unworn antoniniani, as well as a few well-worn bronze coins (Hampel 2011, 100-101). Its full contents and context of discovery is unfortunately unpublished.

Two antiquarian monetary hoards as well as a material hoard are known from Ladenburg.⁸⁹ The first is a hoard Ladenburg I, of 64 coins found in 1846 in the Lustgarten area of the city. The coins range in date from 138 to 249-251, closing with an antoninianus of Trajan Decius, with the majority of the coins being Severan issues, and were part of the private collection of the Great Duke Leopold (FMRD II 1064). No further information is known. The second, Ladenburg II, contains an assortment of 68 denarii and antoniniani that opens with a coin of Titus from 79 and ends with an issue of Trajan Decius dated 249-251 (FMRD II 1145). The coins are in an antiquarian collection and the findspot is unknown.

The so-called ‘Prunkportal’ hoard from Ladenburg was discovered in 1973 in a large building dubbed a *mansio* off of the southern forum of the Roman town (Künzl and Künzl 2003, 10).⁹⁰ The hoard consisted of 51 objects, appearing to be a collection of bronze fittings for an ornate temple door (Künzl and Künzl 2003, 10). The most notable pieces were three lion-headed door pulls, three sea lions, and five busts of deities. Though the items were stylistically dated to the Hadrianic-Antonine period (125-150), the deposition is only listed as sometime before 260 (Künzl and Künzl 2003, 10). No traces of a container were found with the hoard (Künzl and Künzl 2003, 103). Though the hoard was noted as being unique in its composition in comparison to other material hoards in the region, the interpretation was that it was deposited sometime at the end of the Roman settlement (Künzl and Künzl 2003, 177). Despite this conclusion, no stratigraphic information is given to contextualize the deposition of the hoard in the lifespan of the settlement. Therefore, only a deposition after the Antonine period could be assumed.

Further south, a small monetary hoard was found during construction works at Heilbronnerstraße 16-18 at Bad Wimpfen in 1957. The hoard consisted of eleven coins ranging from an issue of Elagabalus in 218 to and issue of Philip the Arab dated to 244. All the coins were perforated and were found in the bottom of a clay pot (FMRD NII 4281/1).

As noted in section 5.4.2, three of the wells at Pforzheim contained deposition of iron tools.⁹¹ While the deposition in well 1 contained eighteen iron tools including a combination of agricultural and stoneworking tools, well 3 contained a few iron stoneworking tools (Kortüm

⁸⁹ A third hoard has been listed mentioned by Heukemes (1981, 458) as being found by a backhoe in excavation of the late Roman *burgus* in Ladenburg, only stating that a freshly-minted antoninianus of Postumus was found in the hoard, but no other coins. While this can be assumed to be the closing date of the hoard, it is not explicitly implied, and it would seem the contents may be suspect given the circumstances of its find. This is notably missing from Okamura’s (1984) and Haupt’s (2001) studies, but cited by Reis (2010, 271) as evidence.

⁹⁰ Despite being known since its discovery in 1973, the hoard does not appear in Fischer’s (1999) survey.

⁹¹ Fischer (1999, 36, nr. 54-56) incorrectly lists well 2 instead of well 4 as the feature which contained metal deposits.

1995, 92). The major deposit was in the bottom of well 4, which contained around 300 pieces. Kortüm (1995, 92-93) interpreted this deposition as the actions of a metalsmith, who had dumped all of their tools and working pieces in one go, expecting to retrieve them after whatever fate befell the settlement, but importantly states that this interpretation is clearly hypothetical.

A hoard totaling 615 coins, all either denarii or antoniniani were found in a clay pot at Köngen in 1967, which was destroyed during excavation. Soon afterwards, the hoard was split up and sold into private ownership. (FMRD NII 4135/1). The coins are mostly Severan, but range in date from a denarius of Marc Antony from 32 BC to an antoninianus of Philip the Arab from 246-247. The potential of a later closing date, however, should not be taken out of consideration, as 36 of the coins in the hoard were unidentifiable. (FMRD NII 4135/1). Despite the problems with the assemblage, Luik (2005, 186) attempts to tie the deposition of the hoard into the events leading to the end of the settlement, choosing to see it as evidence of Alemannic raiding. He rightly states that the deposition could possibly have taken place any time after the 246-247 closing date (Luik 2005, 186). However, he still seems to feel the necessity to tie the deposition of the hoard, and by extension, the end of the town, into the *Limesfall* narrative.

A possible hoard is known from Baden-Baden, though the circumstances of its discovery and the context of its deposition is completely unknown. In the local museum, a collection of fifty coins were found in a cloth bag, with the note 'Fund Baden-Baden' attached to it. The coins range in date from a coin of Claudius dated to 41 to an antoninianus of Tetricus I dated 270-247 (FMRD NII 2917/1). All the coins are bronze issues, with the exception being the coin of Tetricus I. Furthermore, there is a gap in the issues from Septimius Severus onwards. Though the commentary in the FMRD (NII 2917/1) entry states that the find should be treated as a hoard, both the composition and the circumstances of the coins make this conclusion dubious at best.

Likewise, nine sestertii dating from 169 under Marcus Aurelius to 242 under Gordian III were found together at Kapuzingerstraße some 220m east of the town wall at Rottenburg (Gaubatz-Sattler 1999, 407). The FMRD (NII 3317/1) entry for the coins lists them as a 'Kollektivfund', while Haupt (2001, 286, nr. 133) chooses to list the find as a hoard.

Finally, at Heidenheim, a deposition of fourteen bronze vessels was found in a cellar during excavation. The find consisted of three jugs, two pitchers, two buckets, three kettles, a bowl, an *aryballos*, and a piece of a lamp (Fischer 1999, 40, nr. 101). The find was found in the

latest Roman phase of the settlement, located in what appeared to be the remains of a wooden chest. While the deposition was not given an exact date, the vessels were broadly dated from the second to third century, but parallels were given to bronze vessel finds from the extramural settlement at Rainau-Buch (see section 4.12.1).

5.6.2 Conclusions

Ultimately, there is little that can be said for the numismatic hoards. The hoards have been used in passing as evidence for activity and occupation, but not much further consideration about their context and provenance has been taken into account (Reis 2010, 271-275). The dubious nature of the coin hoards, save for Frankfurt-Niedereschbach, Bad Wimpfen, and Köngen lead to problems of interpretation. The lack of publication of the Frankfurt hoard combined with the fact that much of the Köngen hoard was sold off, making collation of the finds suspect, further complicates the issue. The Bad Wimpfen hoard may also be indicative of a special form of deposition based on the small quantity and perforation of the coins. As covered in section 3.4, the tendency to classify all evidence of coin hoarding in the region as evidence of conflict or unease further complicates the issue. However, what is clear is that there is not enough contextual evidence to signal a complex interpretation or a pattern.

With only three material hoards from towns in the region, there is little to discuss in terms of patterns of deposition. Indeed, both the composition of the hoards, as well as locations of their findspots are all different. While there is published stratigraphic evidence to place the iron hoard from Pforzheim in a mid-third century context, the same cannot be said for the temple door hoard from Ladenburg or the bronze vessel hoard from Heidenheim. At a base level, one could make the assumption that both hoards were deposited near the end of the Roman occupation of both settlements. However, without published contextual information, the latest *terminus post quem* would have to be based on stylistic grounds, the mid-second century for Ladenburg and the broad dating of the second-third centuries at Heidenheim. Therefore, the only definitive evidence for mid-third century hoarding at towns are the coin hoards from Frankfurt-Niedereschbach, Bad Wimpfen, and Köngen, and the iron hoard from Pforzheim.

5.7 Towns conclusions

Evidence for mid-third century activity is confined largely to eight of the seventeen towns; Wiesbaden, Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Groß-Gerau, Ladenburg, Pforzheim, Köngen, Baden-Baden, and Rottenburg (*tab. 5.1*). Barring Wiesbaden and Baden-Baden, this is due in no small part to intensive investigation of these towns in the postwar period. Nonetheless, it is important to draw attention to the fact that much of the nuanced data is derived from one or

two archaeological features per site. Overall, rather than a complete abandonment and/or destruction of towns during the survey period, like the evidence from military sites, there is a sense of a shift in the use of occupied space, perhaps due to the changing nature and uncertainty of the Empire. Though it is difficult to confidently give a date to the end of Roman activity on sites, it appears that town life continued in a gradually reduced form into the late 250s, and perhaps after. This is evidenced at towns near the periphery of the region, with new construction occurring at Wiesbaden perhaps into the late third century.

Site Name	Construction/Repair	Demolition	Destruction	Hoarding
Wiesbaden				
Frankfurt-Heddernheim				
Gross-Gerau				
Dieburg				
Ladenburg				
Bad Wimpfen				
Pforzheim				
Kongen				
Baden-Baden				
Rottenburg				
Sulz am Neckar				
Rottweil				
Riegel am Kaiserstuhl				
Faimingen				
Heidenheim				
Nassenfels				
Munningen				

Table 5. 1: Mid-third century activity at towns in Southwest Germany

Furthermore, erection of town walls, both in the immediately preceding period and in the mid-third century would imply that there was a view to continued occupation in the region. The large hall erected at Frankfurt-Heddernheim and smaller curtain wall erected inside the town at Faimingen indicate military use of space in the later phases of towns, a conclusion also reached by Luik (2005) for Ladenburg and Königen based on the presence of *militaria* in the fire debris-filled backfill of cellars. The presence of *militaria* in a frontier province in an increasingly militarized period of history must also be drawn into question, not least due to Luik's (2005) interpretation of these deposits as evidence of Alemannic invasion, furthering the reliance on the historic record to interpret the archaeological record. Moreover, the location of Frankfurt-Heddernheim and Faimingen in the immediate vicinity of the *limes* suggests that these structures are perhaps not unusual, especially given the period of transition. Whether or not this reorganization of space is a sign of a reduction in settlement as

per Reis (2010, 271) and Heising (2014, 327), remains an open question without further evidence.

In many instances the final perceptible sign of activity in towns is either the backfilling of cellars and wells or the levelling of areas (Reis 2010, 272-273). Whether this was to fill in unsafe structures or perhaps with a view to reusing the space for new construction is still a matter of debate. The heavy truncation of the latest Roman stratigraphy by later medieval development and modern construction makes it difficult to interpret these final actions with certainty (Reis 2010, 271). However, this phenomenon ultimately did lead Reis (2010, 274) to conclude that there was a gradual withdrawal of the population from towns.

The presence of Germanic invasion and its effects on the town are largely not present in the archaeology. Save for Wiesbaden, and Köngen, much of which were excavated almost a century ago, extensive traces of burning are not perceptible. While the presence of some burning layers in the mid-third century at Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Groß-Gerau, Ladenburg, Pforzheim, Köngen, and Faimengen, they appear to be confined to specific areas of the town and could therefore just as easily reflect localized accidents as hostile acts. Only the study of the region by Witschel (2011, 33) mentions the possibility of accidental fire in interpretation. Furthermore, the presence of human skeletal remains, largely found in the backfill of wells, and limited to the sites of Frankfurt-Heddernheim, Ladenburg, and Pforzheim leave an open-ended question. In all instances, it appears that the individuals suffered either blunt force trauma or being cut with a sword. Whether these individuals were then thrown into the wells for ritualistic purposes remains a clear possibility, but the presence of gnawing marks from animals in the case of the remains from Pforzheim would seem to indicate that individuals' remains had been exposed to the elements for some time.

The turbulence of the period would seem to have manifested itself as well in the deposition of Jupiter Columns into wells across the region, along with other monuments. It would be prudent to not entirely ascribe their deposition to either raiding Germanic peoples (Noelke (2006, 308-319; 2010-2011, 157-164), nor to a region-wide rejection of Roman authority (Konrad 2015). The real answer is likely more nuanced with a combination of factors including both explanations and more practical reasons of deposition.

The hoarding evidence is also difficult to interpret in this context. The only securely dated material hoard comes from one of the wells at Pforzheim with human remains. The only fully intact coin hoards with a known location are from Bad Wimpfen and Frankfurt-Niedereschbach. Both coin hoards are still problematic, however, due to the nature of the

coins from Bad Wimpfen, and that the Frankfurt hoard is still not fully published. Thus, Reis (2010, 271-274) rightly showed caution using the hoards solely as evidence for activity rather than tying their deposition to the broader scope of the historic narrative.

Therefore, based on the evidence, a long transition can be seen in the towns leading to a cessation of widespread activity during the mid-third century. Rather than an abrupt change in occupation and settlement, there appears to be a slow transition as time progressed, with no single deciding factor leading to the abandonment of these settlements. Witschel (1999, 348) argues that the decline of the region could be plotted during the second half of the third century, with some evidence Roman control of Germanic settlement, though his interpretation of largely based on the reading of the excerpt of the *Panegyrici Latini* (8(V), 10.4) which states that *Raetia* was lost under Gallienus. Moreover, other scholars have concluded that the towns were gradually abandoned based on the evidence, but without also arguing that Germanic settlement followed immediately thereafter (Reis 2010, 274; Heising 2014, 341-343; Konrad 2015). Though there are still very many important questions regarding the end of Roman towns in the region, the archaeological record would seem to generally support the latter's conclusions.

5.8 Rural sites in the mid-third century

Rural sites are overlooked in the syntheses of mid-third century in Southwest Germany. Much of the data is reserved for regional landscape studies, with the conclusions largely drawn on unpublished and/or unexcavated sites.⁹² Discussion of the late phases of occupation is completely missing from recent overview of the region in general (Rupp and Birley 2012; Maurer 2015).⁹³ Two sites in particular, the *villae* at Wurmlingen and the Bietigheim have been cited for evidence in broader studies of the mid-third century, but other sites are left out of the discussion (Balle 1997; Reuter 2003)⁹⁴ Thus, much of the published site data and information used in this section has not previously been exploited for its potential in examining the mid-third century in Southwest Germany.

A total of eighteen rural sites were deemed to have enough published information to show mid-third century activity (*fig. 5.6*). Fifteen sites, Friedberg-Bauernheim, Frankfurt-

⁹² Notable mentions of these include Maurer's (2011) study of the Hessian Ried, Steidl's (2000a) and Lindenthal's (2007) surveys of the Wetterau region, Meyer's (2010) survey of Upper Swabia, and Blöck's (2016) survey of the right bank of the southern Upper Rhine.

⁹³ While Maurer (2015) has no discussion, Rupp and Birley (2012) discuss the late phases on a site by site basis, but interpretation largely sticks to a 233 and/or 260 end of sites due to Alemannic raiding.

⁹⁴ These sites are mentioned in discussions of the end of the Roman period in the region by Reuter (2015) and Sommer (2014). While Wurmlingen (Reuter 2003) is included in the current study, it was not possible to obtain the grey literature report on Bietigheim (Balle 1997), and it has thus been omitted.

Praunheim, Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach, Roßdorf-Am Zahl, Ober-Ramstadt-Ober der Pfingsweide, Großsachsen, Ladenburg “Ziegelscheuer”, Schriesheim, Lomersheim, Pforzheim-Hagenschieß, Bondorf, Bierlingen-Neuhaus, Wurmlingen, Büßlingen, and Laufenburg were in *Germania Superior*. The remaining three, Nördlingen-Holheim, Treuchtlingen-Weinbergshof, and Möckenlohe, were in *Raetia*. Notably, only four sites had mid-third century coinage; Großsachsen, Wurmlingen, Büßlingen, and Laufenburg.

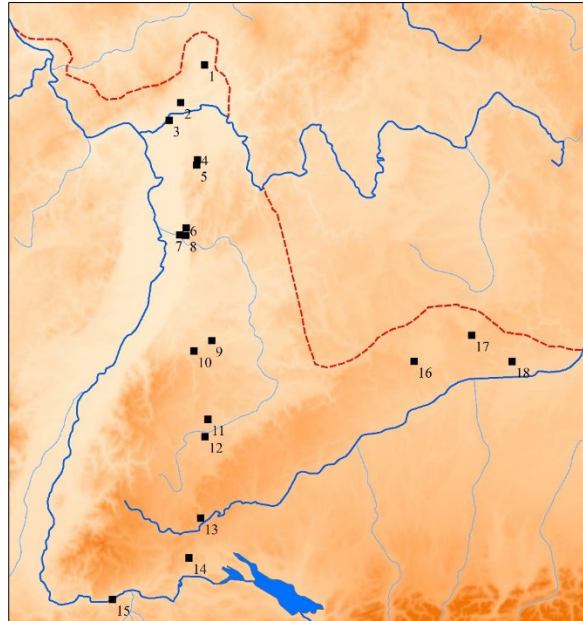


Figure 5. 6: Datable material at rural sites in Southwest Germany.

1. Friedberg-Bauernheim 2. Frankfurt-Praunheim 3. Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach 4. Roßdorf 5. Ober-Ramstadt 6. Großsachsen 7. Ladenburg-Ziegelscheuer 8. Schriesheim 9. Lomersheim 10. Pforzheim-Hagenschieß 11. Bondorf 12. Bierlingen 13. Wurmlingen 14. Büßlingen 15. Laufenburg 16. Nördlingen-Holheim 17. Treuchtlingen 18. Möckenlohe

5.8.1 Rural sites with ceramics dated to the first half of the third century

Eight rural sites had ceramic assemblages that were dated to the first half of the third century. These were Roßdorf, Ladenburg “Ziegelscheuer”, Schriesheim, Bierlingen, Wurmlingen, Nördlingen, Treuchtlingen, and Möckenlohe.

Only one sherd of fine wares was dated to the first half of the third century at Roßdorf, and a few others came from the end of the second to the beginning of the third century (Schmidt 1971, 217). Despite a lack of finds, an end of occupation in the mid-third century was assigned to the site (Schmidt 1971, 217). Importantly, the site was published almost 50 years ago and a modern assessment of the ceramic assemblage may provide a more definitive interpretation. While the single sherd should not be entirely discounted, there is not much material to argue for a secure dating.

The ceramic assemblage from the *villa* at Ladenburg “Ziegelscheuer” was deemed to possibly date to the first half of the third century (Lenz-Bernhard 2002, 156). There is a lack of concise discussion of the finds as they pertain to the site, but a conclusion is reached that the site was either occupied until around 200, with a possible continuation of the site into the mid-third century (Lenz-Bernhard 2002, 146). Much of the interpretation is based on discussion of Rheinzabern, Niederbieber, and Frankfurt-Heddernheim, but little discussion of Ladenburg “Ziegelscheuer” itself (Lenz-Bernhard 2002, 146-156). Thus, a mid-third century occupation of the site is possible but unlikely.

Ceramic and numismatic finds at the *villa* at Schriesheim run out in the late second century, however an unstratified female bust was dated to the mid-third century based on the portraiture and hairstyle of the object (Braun et al. 2013, 185). Though it could also have been deposited later, there is clear evidence in the form of a Germanic disc brooch found in the fill of the site’s well to confirm later activity from the end of the third to the beginning of the fourth century (Braun et al. 2013, 178). Therefore, the unstratified nature of the find leaves the possibility open that the find is residual, due to activity in the post-Roman period. Again, the possibility for mid-third century activity is open, but unlikely.

Only one sherd of a Rheinzabern Dragendorff 37 was found at the Bierlingen, attributed to either potters Julius II or Reginus was dated to the first half of the third century by Dieter Planck (1974, 511). Despite the lack of other diagnostic material, Planck (1974, 525-526) concluded that the *villa* stood at least into the early part of the third century, attributing its abandonment to either of the Alemannic raids in 233 or 259/260. The single sherd again leaves the possibility for a mid-third century occupation possible.

Activity at the *villa* at Wurmlingen was confirmed after a fire dated 220-240 by the presence of Rheinzabern Bernhard group IIIb Julius II/Julianus I ceramics, a Niederbieber 6a dish, as well as two sherds of a Rheinzabern motto beaker dated to 225-260 (Reuter 2003, 50). An antoninianus of Gordian III dated 238-244 was found in excavation of the latest Roman contexts, while an antoninianus of Gallienus dated 256-257 was found but in an unstratified context (Reuter 2003, 50). Two Gallic Empire antoniniani, one of Postumus and one of Tetricus I were found in Alemannic settlement contexts (Reuter 2003, 63-65).

The ceramic assemblage from the *villa* at Nördlingen had an upper date range into the first half of the third century, though this was largely based on engobed ware and local coarse wares rather than imported fine wares (Czysz and Faber 2005, 103). This dating was

reinforced by the discovery of two P-shaped brooches in excavation dated to the second third of the third century (Czysz and Faber 2005, 72-73).

At Treuchtlingen, Rheinzabern made up 58.3% of the total sherd of decorated Samian but none of them came from Bernhard group III (Koch 1993, 34). Indeed, the total assemblage of decorated samian was only 24 sherds. Two sherds of Bernhard Group Ib led Koch to posit that a potential mid-third century date was possible (Koch 1993, 34). The latest coin find was an issue of Severus Alexander dated to 222, leading Koch (1993, 38) to state that while a 233 destruction of the site would be convenient, it could not be said with confidence.

Furthermore, the presence of rätische Ware leaves open the possibility of a mid-third century date (Koch 1993, 52). Although there is a lack of Rheinzabern Bernhard Group III ceramics, a mid-third century date cannot be ruled out.

The latest ceramic finds from the *villa* at Möckenlohe were three sherds of Rheinzabern Bernhard group III, all from the potter Januarius II, making up 14% of the total Rheinzabern assemblage (Schafitzl 2012, 121). These finds, along with a fragment of a millefiori glass vessel given a *terminus post quem* of 244-248 were used as dating criteria for the end of the site (Schafitzl 2012, 120). The conclusion was that the finds indicated a continued occupation into the first half of the third century, with an end in the mid-third century most likely (Schafitzl 2012, 146-147). However, the final sealed context on the site, a cellar backfilled with fire debris was not excavated stratigraphically, making it difficult to tell what ceramics were in use at the end of the site and what ceramics were residual waste from the cellar (Schafitzl 2012, 101-102). Despite the lack of stratigraphic excavation of this feature, the fact that these late finds come from a sealed context should still imply mid-third century activity.

5.8.2 Rural sites with ceramics dated to the first third of the third century

Großsachsen is the only site with a ceramic assemblage dated to the first third of the third century. While there was a cessation of finds after the beginning of the third century, the presence of an antoninianus of Gallienus dated to 257 was found in excavation, though it came from an unstratified context (Hagendorn 1999, 174). The find was given two interpretations; either the site was occupied until the mid-third century when it was destroyed in a fire, or a residual find from post-Roman Germanic occupation of the site (Hagendorn 1999, 176-177). The lack of mid-third century material culture led the excavator to err towards the latter interpretation (Hagendorn 1999, 174, 177). Given the lack of material culture and the nature of the coin find, mid-third century occupation is possible, but unlikely.

5.8.2 Rural sites with ceramics dated to the second third of the third century

Eight rural sites had ceramic assemblages dated to the second third of the third century.

These were Friedberg-Bauernheim, Frankfurt-Praunheim, Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach, Ober-Ramstadt, Lomersheim, Pforzheim-Hagenschieß, Bondorf, and Büßlingen.

At Friedberg-Bauernheim, the backfill of a cellar contained a ceramic assemblage dated to the second third of the third century (Wagner 1987-1988).

The presence of Urmitzer Ware at the *villa* at Frankfurt-Praunheim led to the conclusion that the site was presumably abandoned around the same time as Frankfurt-Heddernheim (Wieland 2007 176, 179). The site was not destroyed and was robbed for stone in the medieval period (Wieland 2007, 191).

A small stone building interpreted as a centre for cult practice at Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach was deemed to be abandoned sometime around 260 (Heising 2013, 301). A small pit in the building contained a 1.2x0.7m wooden box, containing some 30-35 different forms of ceramics, all dated by the excavator to 230-260, the most common being a variant of a Niederbieber 33 beaker from Mainz (Heising 2013, 304-307). The ceramics were then broken *in situ* (Heising 2013, 304).

Ceramic evidence from the *villa* at Ober-Ramstadt contained multiple examples of late Rheinzabern, including sherds from potters Julius II/Julianus I, Victor II/Januco, and Statutus. (Schmidt 1971, 134-35). These late examples led the excavator to attribute the end of the site to the Alemannic invasion of 259/260 based on the ceramic assemblage (Schmidt 1971, 135). Many of the sherds were unidentified (Schmidt 1971, 134). Thus, a modern reassessment would be beneficial in further elaborating the site. The importance of a reassessment is compounded by the fact that the report is almost 50 years old. Nonetheless, while the interpretation is suspect, the dating is still secure.

The fine ware ceramic assemblage from the *villa* at Lomesheim mainly consisted of late Rheinzabern Ware, including examples of potters Belsus III, Primitivus II, and Julius II/Julianus I, as well as forms with egg and dart E 25/26 (Hugonot et al. 1991, 184). The residential section of the *villa* was truncated by a modern road, destroying part of the site (Hugonot et al. 1991, 182). However, enough of the site remained for the excavators to conclude it was occupied into the second third of the third century (Hugonot et al. 1991, 184).

The chronology for the end of the *villa* at Pforzheim-Hagenschieß was based solely on the Samian evidence (Baumgartner-Heck 2001, 732). Decorated sherds only make up 20% of the Samian assemblage (49 out of 245 sherds), with 29 identifiable sherds coming from

Rheinabern Ware vessels (Baumgartner-Heck 2001, 720). Of these, four were from Bernhard group IIIa, three from IIIb, and one from IIIc (Baumgartner-Heck 2001, 720). This led to a conclusion that the site was abandoned sometime around 260, with the excavator saying the end of the site was roughly analogous with that of Pforzheim (Baumgartner-Heck 2001, 726).

At Bondorf, Rheinabern Bernhard group IIIa made up nine percent of the decorated Samian assemblage, and group IIIb made up five percent (Gaubatz-Sattler 1994, 136). This led to a conclusion that the *villa* was abandoned sometime in the second third of the third century, after 240 (Gaubatz-Sattler 1994, 136, 138).

At Büßlingen, an occupation into the second third of the third century seemed to be confirmed mainly by numismatic finds, including an antoninianus of Philip the Arab dated to 246-248 as well as a coin hoard ending with an antoninianus of Gallienus dated to 258-259 (Heiligmann-Batsch 1997, 34, 55).

5.8.4 Rural sites with ceramics dated to the final third of the third century

The final rural site, and only site with a ceramic dating in the final third of the third century is the *villa* at Laufenburg. Ceramic and numismatic finds continued on at the site into the fourth century, with parallels to sites on the other side of the Rhine (Rothkegel 1994, 64). As the site lies on the edge of the Rhine and near the periphery of *Germania Superior* after the Roman withdrawal from the region, the excavator argued that this should be not unexpected (Rothkegel 1994, 64).

Thus, all but five of the sites in the survey display fairly secure dating criteria for mid-third century activity. The exceptions to these are Großsachsen, Roßdorf, and Ladenburg “Ziegelscheuer”, where there is a possibility for activity, but the likelihood is slim. The lack of finds in all cases, as well as the lack of discussion of the site at Ladenburg “Ziegelscheuer” are the main reasons for this conclusion. Additionally, there is more probable evidence for mid-third century activity at Bierlingen and Treuchtlingen. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the structural evidence to analyze the possibility for mid-third century activity.

5.9 Construction at rural sites

Four rural sites showed evidence for mid-third century construction (*fig. 4.20*). All were located in *Germania Superior* and included Bondorf, Wurlingen, Büßlingen, and Laufenburg.

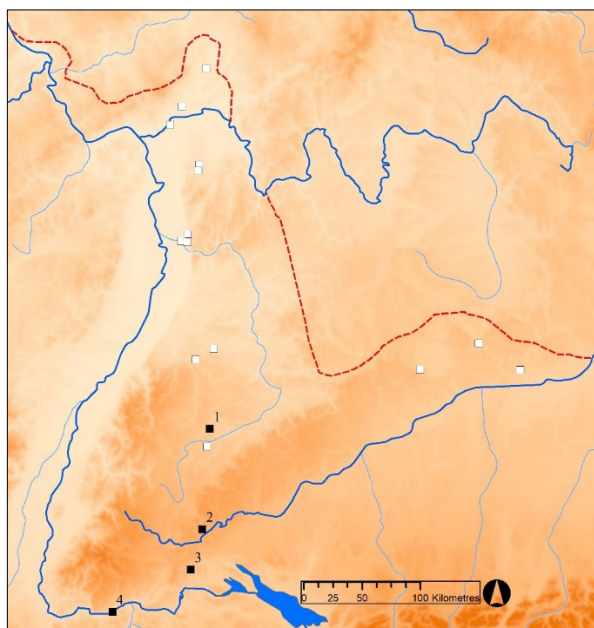


Figure 5. 7: Construction at rural settlements in Southwest Germany.

1. Bondorf 2. Wurmlingen 3. Büßlingen 4. Laufenburg

At Bondorf, modifications to the bath house associated with the *villa* were made in the latest phases of occupation. A small *piscina* was installed into the floor of the *frigidarium*, in front of the older, larger *piscina* (Gaubatz-Sattler 1994, 123-124). Sometime later, the *tepidarium* appeared to no longer be heated due to a large stone being placed in the heating channel, blocking it off (Gaubatz-Sattler 1994, 123-124).

Stone construction phase 3 began after a fire burned down part of the *villa* at Wurmlingen sometime between 220-240. While the main building on the site was no longer in use, a small drystone foundation built out of rubble to support a heating channel for drying grain was erected in the northern part of the building's cellar (Reuter 2003, 51). However, this was deemed to only have been for a short period of time, as the northern half of the cellar was backfilled in the same construction phase (Reuter 2003, 51). Additionally, a small oven was built on the ruins of the main building out of broken pieces of the hypocaust *suspensura* from room II of the structure (Reuter 2003, 51).

The walking surface of room I of the outbuilding was also lowered some 0.55m into the ground, where a large hearth made of broken pieces of green sandstone was put into the northern side of the room (Reuter 2003, 52). A smaller hearth made of broken *tegulae* was erected in the southern end of the room (Reuter 2003, 52). The hearths appeared to be used for the recycling of old metal due to finds of bronze, iron fragments, and molten slag nearby (Reuter 2003, 52). These may have come from the ruins of the main building, which appear

to have been stripped of metal after the fire, save for 21 bronze horse fittings and iron door fittings found in the cellar of the main building (Reuter 2003, 51). Finally, the bath house seemed to be converted in this final construction phase. The back of a cold water basin of the *frigidarium* was taken off to make the tank accessible, the limestone cladding was removed around the basin, and a new walking surface introduced (Reuter 2003, 54). The wastewater channel was also sealed off with mortar, implying that water was no longer running into the room (Reuter 2003, 54). The two eastern rooms still appear to have been used for bathing, as a new wastewater channel was constructed out of used *tubuli* (Reuter 2003, 54).

A narrow timber posthole construction was erected in the middle of the main building at Büßlingen. It was stratigraphically in the latest phases of occupation but it was unclear if this was the latest Roman feature or evidence of early Alemannic settlement (Heiligmann-Batsch 1997, 43).

At Laufenburg, a leading incline was constructed over the backfill debris of room 3 which had gone out of use, in order to reach cellar 4 (Rothkegel 1994, 63). Although undated, Rothkegel (1994, 63) claims that the erection of the north hall, room N, and the installation of a grain dryer in heated room J took place sometime in the mid to late third century.

Though the evidence for construction at rural sites is limited, they perhaps give some of the best stratigraphic evidence in the region. This could be that most examples have been excavated in the modern period, leading to further attention to the stratigraphic sequence and a more nuanced interpretation of the finds. The sequence of events noted at Wurmlingen shows a clear, concise use of the site through the course of the mid-third century, while the other three sites show a reuse of occupied space, presumably in order to meet the changing function of the sites. Büßlingen is the only site out of the four where there is some question of the dating, whether it be mid-third century or slightly later.

Notable is the modification of bath houses, similar to the process seen at military sites on the *limes* (section 4.8.1; Scholz 2018).⁹⁵ The modifications at Bondorf and Wurmlingen point to the fact that the structures were still in use, likely for bathing purposes, but in a reduced function. The cause of this, whether a lack of resources or a reduced level of occupation, is not perceptible in the archaeological record.

⁹⁵ Scholz (2018) mentions both Bondorf and Wurmlingen in his review and adds the bath houses from the *villae* at Lauffen am Neckar, Owen near Tübingen, and Ludwigsburg-Hoheneck, and the town at Güglingen. All examples except for Lauffen are not fully published, leading to difficulty in interpretation, while Lauffen seems to have been abandoned before the mid-third century,

5.10 Demolition at rural sites

Seven rural sites displayed evidence for mid-third century demolition in the survey area (fig. 5.8). Six of the seven, Friedberg-Bauernheim, Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach, Schriesheim, Lomersheim, Wurmlingen, and Laufenburg, were in *Germania Superior*, while the final site, Möckenlohe, was in *Raetia*.

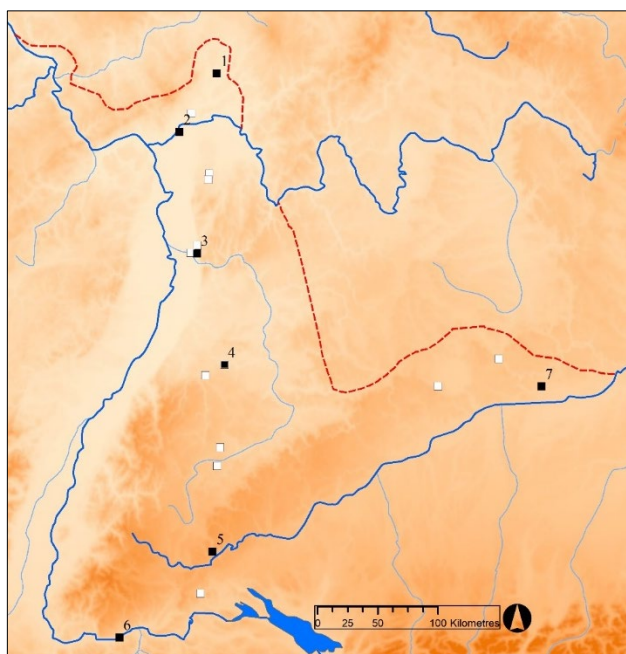


Figure 5. 8: Demolition at rural settlements in Southwest Germany.

1. Friedberg-Bauernheim 2. Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach 3. Schriesheim 4. Lomersheim 5. Wurmlingen 6. Laufenburg 7. Möckenlohe

5.10.1 Evidence for demolition at rural sites

At Friedberg-Bauernheim, a stone cellar associated with the *villa* was backfilled at the end of the occupation, with little more information known (Wagner 1987-1988).

In contrast, the cult building at Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach appears to have gone through a careful process of demolition, one which included a potential ritual closing of the site (Heising 2013). In the northeast corner of the structure, a stone well was backfilled, with three different phases of deposition identified in excavation (Heising 2013, 301). The first fill contained material dating from when the well was in use, but the second layer contained a fill of darkly-coloured organic material, including four complete sets of deer antlers, and half of a five point set (Heising 2013, 301-302). The two largest specimens were placed so that they over-crossed each other and created a circle. The top fill contained soil and rubble consisting of stone, tile, slate shingles, and clay chunks. Pottery dated the fill to the mid-third century (Heising 2013, 302-303). Immediately next to the well a small pit was dug out, containing a 1.2x0.7m wooden box, which held some 30-35 complete ceramic vessels, which were then

destroyed *in situ* (Heising 2013, 304-307). Immediately above the box were a number of deer bones and the remains of a horse skeleton with its head turned backwards (Heising 2013, 304-307). Due to impressions made in the pit, it appeared as if the horse had been pressed into it (Heising, 2013, 304-307). The interpretation of the backfilling of the well and the nearby pit was that of a closing ritual, with Celtic iron age precedents, especially due to the horse burial (Heising 2013, 309-310).

Furthermore, Heising (2013, 311) noted a number of parallels in *Germania Superior*, including Frankfurt-Heftgewann, Raunheim-Groß-Gerau, Obernberg am Main, Ilvesheim, Pforzheim, and Breisach-Hochstetten.⁹⁶ The deposition of deer antlers or deer skeletons is also a phenomenon that Martin-Kilcher (2007, 41-47) associated with earlier Celtic precedents, citing contemporary mid-third century examples in modern-day Switzerland, France, and Belgium, in addition to the evidence from Southwest Germany. Thus, it could be argued that the backfilling of the well and pit in the cult building at Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach provides the best evidence for ritual closing of a Roman site in Southwest Germany during the mid-third century. This is one of the very rare cases in the survey where the intentional disuse and abandonment of the site appears clearly in the archaeological record.

Evidence for demolition at Schriesheim is very slight. The excavator posited that because there was no evidence of mortar or wood on the stone foundations of the *villa*'s outbuilding, the structure had been intentionally dismantled for reuse elsewhere (Braun et al. 2013, 184). Though the action could not be precisely dated, the context was placed within an Alemannic raid, sometime around 260 (Braun et al. 2013, 184). The conclusion seemed to be further bolstered by the fact that there were no traces of burning found on the stone foundations of the structure (Braun et al. 2013, 181).

The *villa* at Lomersheim appears to have been backfilled with rubble and then levelled over sometime after the site had burnt down (Hugonot et al. 1991, 182-184). However, most of the evidence for this sequence of events comes from the backfilling of a cellar. There was limited investigation of the site as excavation took place due to the construction of a modern road (Hugonot et al. 1991, 182-183).

Stone building phase 3 at Wurmlingen saw the gradual process of backfilling the cellar associated with the main building at the site after a catastrophic fire sometime between 220-240 (Reuter 2003, 51). The southern half of the cellar was backfilled with debris, while the

⁹⁶ For Obernburg am Main see section 4.9.1

northern half was set up as a possible grain drying operation (see section 5.9.1). Shortly thereafter, the northern end of the cellar was backfilled as well (Reuter 2003, 51).

Although not precisely dated, rooms 2 and 3 of the *villa* at Laufenburg were backfilled with debris sometime in the early-mid third century, necessitating the construction of a new pathway to reach cellar 4 (see section 5.9.1; Rothkegel 1994, 63).

At Möckenlohe, the cellar of the main building of the *villa* was backfilled with building and fire debris after the overlying structure had been destroyed (Schafnitzl 2012, 101-102).

5.10.2 Conclusions

As with both military sites and towns, the main evidence for site demolition is present through the backfilling of wells and cellars, though the levelling that usually follows is notably absent from the rural sites outside of Lomersheim. However, Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach has so far provided the only clear example in the survey area of an intentional closing of the site, via ritual deposition. This is possibly due to the small size of the site and thus the feasibility of undertaking complete excavation, but nonetheless its importance should not be understated. The only sites where there may be doubt to the actions or timing are Schriesheim, where an absence of evidence has been used for an interpretation of intentional demolition, and Laufenburg, where the dating of the sequence of events is not very strong.

5.11 Destruction at rural sites

Seven sites in the survey area showed evidence of destruction (*fig. 5.9*). Four of the sites, Großsachsen, Lomersheim, Wurmlingen, and Büßlingen, were in *Germania Superior*.⁹⁷ The remaining three, Nordlingen, Treuchtlingen, and Möckenlohe, were in *Raetia*. Of these, the sites at Treuchtlingen and Möckenlohe also contained human remains that were directly associated with final destruction contexts on the sites.

⁹⁷ The *villa* at Oberndorf-Bochingen was interpreted to have been destroyed by an earthquake in the mid-third century due to the layout of the wall collapse (Sommer 2007). However, the site was abandoned in the late second century, and so is not included as evidence.

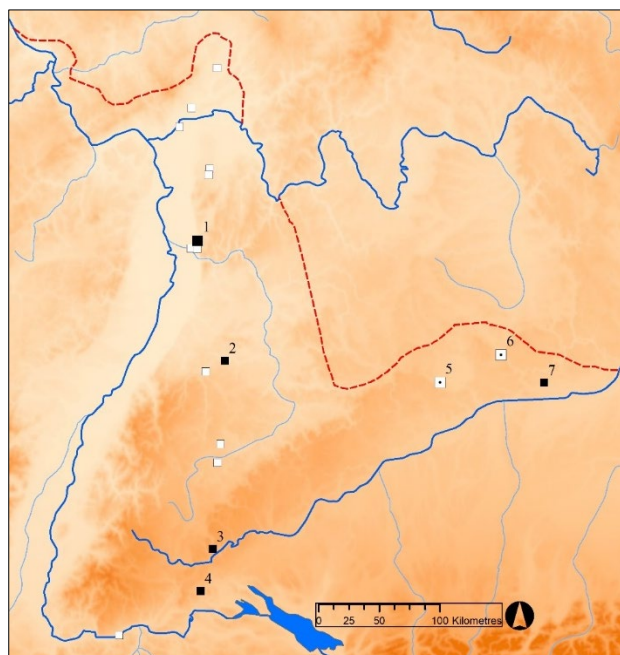


Figure 5. 9: Destruction at rural settlements in Southwest Germany. Key: Large black square – Burning layer across entire site; Small black square – Burning layer across partial site; White square with dot – Burning layer across entire site with skeletal remains

1. Großsachsen 2. Lomersheim 3. Wurmlingen 4. Büßlingen 5. Nördlingen-Holheim 6. Treuchtlingen 7. Möckenlohe

5.11.1 Evidence for destruction at rural sites

A burning layer was found across the entire *villa* at Großsachsen, with two different interpretations leading to the time of the fire. As the ceramic assemblage ended in the first third of the third century, the excavator felt it likely that the fire occurred at the end of this period, tying it into the Alemannic raid of 233 (Hagendorn 1999, 176-177). However, a well-worn issue of Gallienus from an unstratified context, left open the interpretation that the site may have lasted into the mid-third century, with the Alemannic raid of 259-260 being the culprit (Hagendorn 1999, 176-177). Based on the dating criteria as a whole for the site, it is possible but unlikely that the site lasted into the mid-third century; it is also just as unlikely that the site was intentionally destroyed in an Alemannic raid.

The *villa* at Lomersheim was destroyed in a fire sometime during the second third of the third century (Hugonot et al. 1991, 184). The evidence for the fire in the main building came from a 3m wide burning layer corresponding to the width of the modern road (Hugonot et al. 1991, 182). Due to lack of excavation of the other areas of the site, it is not possible to say if the fire spread to the entire complex or was confined to the main building.

At Wurmlingen, only the main building of the *villa* complex was destroyed in a fire, sometime between 220-240 based on ceramic evidence (Reuter 2003, 36). While the fire did not touch the other buildings in the complex, the event signaled a change in the use of the space of the main building, the bath house, and the outbuilding (see section 5.9). Importantly,

Reuter (2003, 104) is dubious about using the Alemannic raid of 233 as the culprit for the fire, but does not wholly discredit it. Furthermore, the span between 220-240 for the fire given by Reuter means that while a mid-third century date is possible, it is unlikely.

Destruction in fire is limited to one small area of the compound at Büßlingen, in room B 12 of the so-called servants' quarters building IV B (Heiligmann-Batsch 1997, 34). Eleven coins were found in between the debris of the collapsed walls and the red hardened clay floor, the latest being an antoninianus of Philip the Arab from 246-248 (Heiligmann-Batsch 1997, 34). Thus, it should be safe to assume that this was a contained, accidental fire that did not signal the end of occupation at the site, but rather one event during the late phase of occupation.

The entire site at Nördlingen was destroyed in a fire sometime during the second third of the third century. (Czysz and Faber 2005, 135-136). The skeletal remains of two individuals were found with clear evidence of blunt force trauma and were associated with the destruction of the site as they were found under collapsed building debris (Czysz and Faber 2005, 108-110). The remains of a woman in her 20s-40s was found outside of the bath house, and of a man in his 40s-60s outside of outbuilding 7 (Czysz and Faber 2005, 136). While there is no clear evidence of agency for the fire or the two individuals, the excavators tied the end of the settlement into the *Limesfall* 259-260 (Czysz and Faber 2005, 139). However, there remains the possibility of an accidental fire, or intentional by individuals other than Germanic raiders. Further, if the blunt force trauma could have been caused by the collapse of the buildings or by a killing blow from another individual.

The settlement at Truechtlingen ended in a catastrophic fire that engulfed the entire site (Koch 1993, 38). In the destruction layers of the site, three findspots contained human bone, all within the main building. No complete nor partially-intact skeletons were found (Koch 1993, 47). A phalange from the hand of a child was found in the portico, a small fragment of the left temporal bone and part of a jawbone from either an adult male or older juvenile were found in room 5, and a weathered fragment of a human rib in room 4 (Koch 1993, 47). The excavator admitted that tying the destruction and human remains to the Alemannic raid of 233 would be a convenient interpretation, but that the presence of *rätische Ware* at the site left the possibility open for a later, mid-third century destruction (Koch 1993, 52). Furthermore, the weathered nature of the rib fragment and the overall fragmentary nature of the skeletal remains would suggest that the bodies were moved in part from their location, either by animals or people scavenging the site. Though the excavator noted there was an absence of material securely dated to beyond 233, they left the interpretation open that the site may have been destroyed later.

The main building from the compound at Möckenlohe was destroyed in a fire in the mid-third century, with the cellar later being backfilled with fire debris (Schaflitzl 2012, 101-102).

Though there is no real evidence to tie the two sites together, the final interpretation was that the end of the *villa* was connected to the final destruction of the nearby fort at Pfünz (Schaflitzl 2012, 146-147). As there is evidence for the destruction of only the main building, a wholesale destruction of the site should not be assumed. Tying the end of the site into the dramatic end to Pfünz may be a convenient interpretation, but it overlooks the fact that many different factors, most of them non-hostile, could have led to the burning of the main building.

5.11.2 Conclusions

Only Großsachsen, Nördlingen and Treuchtlingen displayed evidence of the entire site being destroyed. Perhaps not coincidentally, Nördlingen and Treuchtlingen also happen to be the two sites with human skeletal remains. Importantly, remains at both sites were found within the rubble of actual destruction deposits, making their correlation with the end of both sites likely. Though a complete destruction of Lomersheim cannot be ruled out, the partial excavation of the site means it is currently impossible to assess the extent of destruction. Furthermore, a mid-third century destruction at Großsachsen and Treuchtlingen is unlikely based on the dated evidence as it stands. This ultimately leaves Nördlingen as the only published site in the region with clear evidence of a mid-third century destruction across the entire site. For the remaining three examples, the fires appear to be accidental in nature, as they were contained to either one building, or in the case of Büßlingen, a single room. At least from the available published information, there is little evidence for the destruction of rural sites in the survey region.

5.12 Hoarding at rural sites

Two hoards are known from the rural sites in the survey, Wurmlingen and Büßlingen (*fig. 5.10*). Both are in the south of the survey area, in *Germania Superior*. Fischer (1999, 30) lists some 35 material hoards from so-called *villae rusticate*, twelve of which come from the survey area. As with the examples from military sites and towns, the material utilized in the study is either from unpublished sites or lacks a secure dating for deposition, with a wide stylistic date range for the finds. Notably, Wurmlingen is missing.

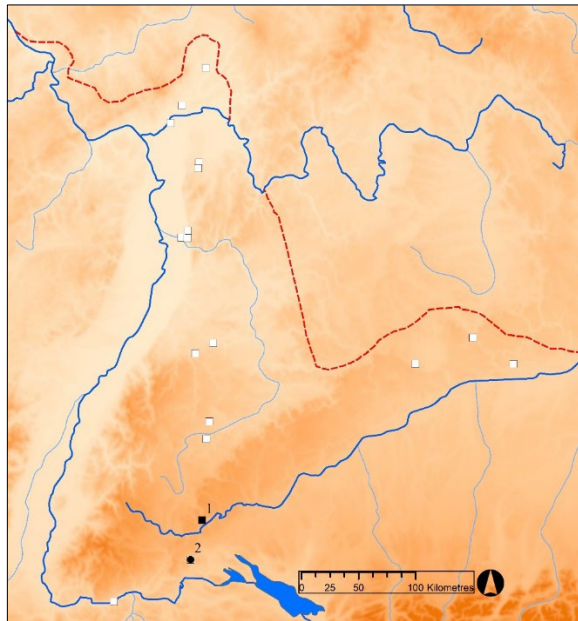


Figure 5. 10: Hoarding at rural settlements in Southwest Germany. Key: Circle – Monetary hoards; Black square – Material hoards

1. Wurmlingen 2. Büßlingen

A small iron scrap hoard was buried within the ruins of the main building at Wurmlingen (Reuter 2003, 51). This is likely a collection of goods collected for recycling. Most of the metal appeared to be scavenged from the ruins of the building, and the introduction of two hearths in the outbuilding appeared to be purposed for melting down scrap metal due to the collection of fragments and slag in the vicinity (Reuter 2003, 51-52).

At Büßlingen, a hoard of 99 coins including three sestertii and 96 antoniniani and ending with an issue of Gallienus dated 258-259 was found in the facing of the wester outer wall of building VII (Heiligmann-Batsch 1997, 55). While the excavator admitted that the date was convenient to tie in with Limesfall, they interpreted it as a savings hoard, as there was no perceptible trace of any effect associated with raiding or being overrun (Heiligmann-Batsch 1997, 55,117).

Neither of the two hoards from rural sites seem to point to anything that would be perceived as out of the ordinary. The collection of scrap metal for recycling and the presence of a savings hoard would both seem to represent a continuation of normal practices throughout the mid-third century. However, with evidence from only two of eighteen rural sites in the study, it could be argued that there is not a large enough data set to make more than general observations.

5.13 Rural site conclusions

Fifteen of the eighteen sites examined displayed evidence for mid-third century activity beyond their finds assemblages (*table 4.3*). The sites with the highest-resolution data limited

to the *villae* at Wurmlingen, and Büßlingen, and the cult building at Groß-Gerau-Kelsterbach, where clear sequences of activity were able to be dated during the period. Indeed, it could be argued that the best evidence for mid-third century activity comes from the excavation reports of rural sites. Thus, it is somewhat ironic that they are largely missing from the narrative. However, what can be seen is that outside of the site of Nördlingen and Treuchtlingen, there is little evidence for any sort of massive disruption due to either civil war or invading barbarians. Even at these sites it would be impossible to attribute the destruction and non-retrieval of skeletal remains to any one specific agent. Where there is evidence of fire and burning, it largely appears to be isolated to a single building or room, more likely the victim of chance than intentional destruction.

Site Name	Construction/Repair	Demolition	Destruction	Hoarding
Friedberg-Bauernheim				
Frankfurt-Praunheim				
Gross-Gerau-Kelsterbach				
Rossdorf - Am Zahl				
Ober-Ramstadt - Ober der Pfingsweide				
Grossachsen				
Ladenburg "Ziegelscheuer"				
Schriesheim				
Lomersheim				
Pforzheim-Hagenschiess				
Bondorf				
Bierlingen-Neuhaus				
Wurmlingen				
Buesslingen				
Laufenburg				
Noerdlingen-Holheim				
Treuchtlingen-Weinbergshof				
Moeckenlohe				

Table 5. 2: Mid-third century activity at rural settlements in Southwest Germany

Furthermore, the modification of bath houses at Bondorf and Wurmlingen is also seen in the extramural settlements of military sites. Whether this points more to a pragmatic shift in the use of space and resources, or perhaps reduced occupancy of the site, must remain an open question. The reuse of buildings destroyed by fire, such as the main building at Wurmlingen would also seem to display a reuse of space for more immediate needs as time progressed. The evidence, where present, does largely appear to indicate a pragmatic shift in the occupation of the sites until their operation perhaps became untenable. Despite the lack of rural sites in the overall discussion, the results do appear to confirm these implications.

6. Numismatic and Epigraphic Data from Southwest Germany

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the numismatic and epigraphic assemblages for Southwest Germany independent of the archaeological record. Outside of coin hoards, these two classes of data have been secondary to building the regional narrative for the end of Roman occupation in Southwest Germany. Furthermore, there are few existing studies that focus strictly on numismatic and epigraphic data from the region. However, examining these assemblages in aggregate on their own is important to weigh them against the established narratives for the region. A few key points will become apparent throughout the chapter.

Numismatic evidence shows a decline in coin circulation across all site types with Reece period XII (238-260), specifically during the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251) and Trebonianus Gallus (251-253). Beginning with the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus, there is a clear influx of coinage into the region. There is a further influx of coinage into the region except at military sites during Reece period XIII (260-275), which has led to speculation of intervention by the Gallic Empire into the region (Stribrny 1989), possibly to facilitate an influx of Alemannic settlers (Sommer 2014). However, generally low levels of Gallic Empire coinage and a lack of evidence in the archaeological record cast doubt on the latter interpretation. As well, it is demonstrated that the evidence from coin hoards is not a valid indicator for historic events, especially in the context of *Limesfall*.

Finally, epigraphic trends for the region also see a sharp decline beginning with the reign of Trajan Decius. Though this fits in with larger general patterns of the Western Empire and is not necessarily a sign of decline, the presence of four milestones from the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus suggest that there was government investment in the infrastructure well into the 250s, fitting with the initial influx of coinage into the region at this time.

6.2 Numismatic trends in Southwest Germany

Although the compilation of the FMRD volumes provide a rich dataset from which to conduct large-scale numismatic analysis, there are few wider numismatic studies that focus on Southwest Germany. Extant studies are primarily focused on the establishment of the military frontier (Kortüm 1998; Reece 2012), the evidence for coin circulation in the region past the traditional *Limesfall* dates of 259/260 (Stribrny 1989; Sommer 2014), or coin circulation in towns (Kortüm 1996). In general, the method established by Reece (1995) and furthered by Walton (2012) for establishing regional means and assessing coin loss in Britain has not been applied to the region. Although this methodology is admittedly not usually employed outside

of Britain, the hope is that the accumulation of this data will help spur further discussion.⁹⁸ While site-by-site comparison is beyond the scope of this thesis, the data as collected allows for further extrapolation and closer analysis in future research.⁹⁹

6.2.1 General numismatic trends in Southwest Germany

A total of 34,688 coins were collated from the region to put together the general numismatic trends for Southwest Germany (see Appendix B.1). By far, the largest number, 13,138 came from military sites, followed by towns with 9142 examples, and rural sites with 1524. There was a total of 8853 stray finds from the region, either from antiquarian collections or found by chance and not associated with a known site type. An additional 167 coins were deemed to come from residual post-Roman contexts such as Migration Period and medieval graves.

Although Reece periods XII (238-260; Gordian III-Valerian/Gallienus joint reign) and XIII (260-275; Gallienus sole reign-Aurelian) are the pertinent data sets for the study, some general comments about the data should be made before examining the mid-third century assemblage (*fig. 6.1; fig. 6.2*). The trends show a high rate of coin loss amongst all sites in Reece period I (Republic-41; Republic to Augustan/early Julio-Claudian dynasty), which coincides with the initial occupation of the region under the reign of Augustus. It must be noted that this is partially influenced by the large amount of coins retrieved in modern excavation from the fort at Hofheim, of which 816 of the 1342 coins from military in Reece period I come from (FMRD V 1089-1094). A spike is then seen in Reece period IV (69-96, Flavian dynasty) amongst all sites but especially for towns. This is paired with a sustained peak through to Reece period VIII (161-180; late Antonine dynasty), likely due to the gradual advancement of the frontier in the region (Kortüm 1998, 49-57). There is then a gradual decline in coin loss until Reece period X (193-222; early Severan dynasty), where coin loss on military sites dominates the rate of coin loss over other site types. Reece period XI (222-238; late Severan dynasty) begins the second decline in overall coin loss, with military sites still predominating the assemblage. Beginning with the mid-third century and Reece period XII and XIII, stray finds predominate in the assemblage, continuing through to period XX (377-388; early Theodosian dynasty). Furthermore, there is a severe drop off in the coin loss at military sites from period XI to period XII, with coinage virtually absent at military sites in period XIII. In period XIII finds from extramural settlements all but disappear, though this

⁹⁸ Reece's (1987) method for establishing coin loss has only sparingly been applied in the region, by Reece (2012) himself in a study of coin loss on early Roman fort sites to help establish early chronologies for Samian Ware, as well as by Blöck (2016, 205-222). However, Blöck (2016) does not translate percentages into *per mill* totals, instead sticking with percentages.

⁹⁹ Smaller regional studies do exist, for example Steidl (1996; 2000a, 19-25) for the Wetterau and Blöck (2016, 204-222) for the right bank of the southern Upper Rhine, but are beyond the scope of the current study.

could be due to the association of finds with the forts and extramural settlements rather than one or the other. General coin loss for towns is higher in periods XII and XIII than military sites, and indeed higher than the preceding period XI for towns. Interestingly, finds from rural sites, while still relatively small compared to previous periods, eclipse both towns and military sites in periods.

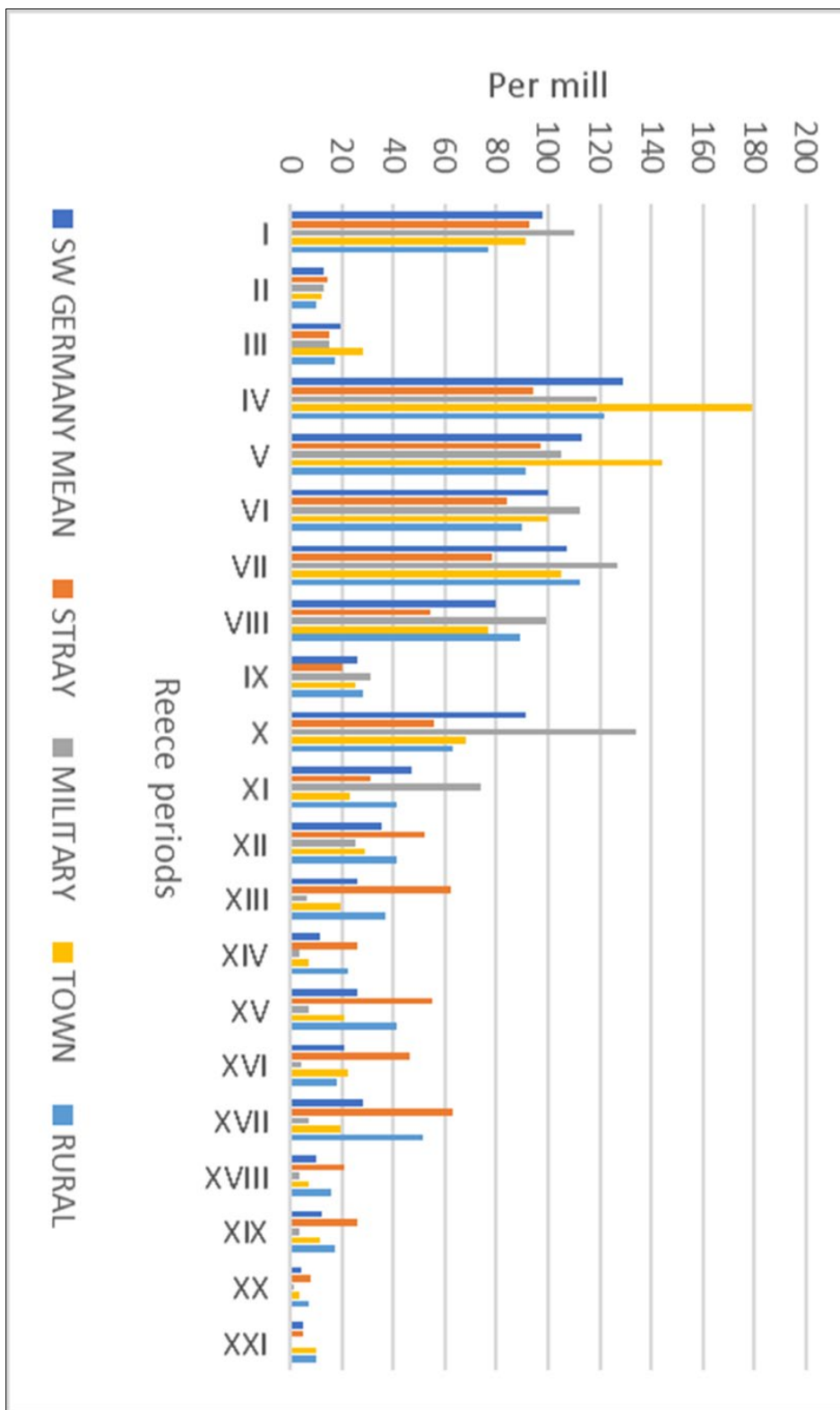


Figure 6. 1: General coin loss trends for Southwest Germany

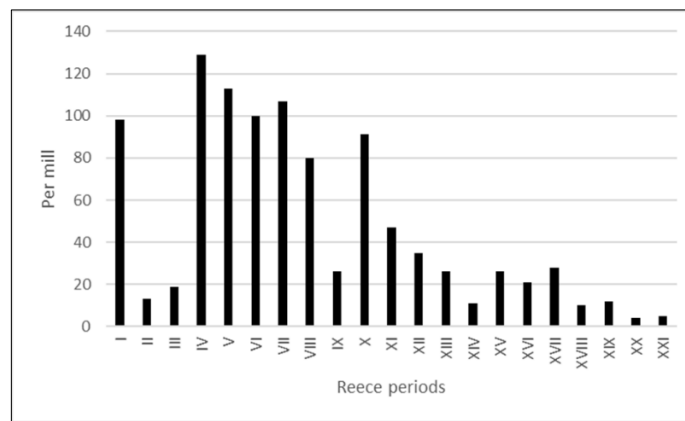


Figure 6. 2: Southwest German mean

The larger presence of stray and rural coins in period would seem to go against the findings from the archaeological data. However, the large rural assemblage may be biased, as it is predominated by finds not from excavation, but from sites noted by FMRD to have Roman remains of either a settlement, *villa*, or homestead. Furthermore, some stray finds may indeed come from sites, but are from antiquarian collections with unknown findspots.

Recent research has tried to explain the presence of the general finds from periods XII and XIII as evidence of the Gallic Empire facilitating the movement of Germanic people into Southwest Germany beginning in the 260s (Sommer 2014).¹⁰⁰ This in turn was an expansion of the conclusions of Stribrny (1989, 478) and Witschel (2011, 41), that the evidence pointed to a stabilization of coinage in the region under the Gallic emperor Postumus, which must have included a Germanic element to some degree. Given the lack of archaeological evidence to back up intensive Alemannic settlement in the region in the mid-third century, it would be best to take the cautious approach of Stribrny instead of assigning the post-260 coin circulation wholesale to Germanic settlers. A final spike in Reece period XVII, again mainly in stray finds, is the last influx of coin loss at sites across the region. Thus, the general trends point to a general decline in the coinage from the Flavian period onward, reaching its nadir in Reece period XIV (275-296; Tacitus-Allectus), immediately after the survey period. While there is a significant drop in coin loss from the late Severan period to the mid-third century, coinage does not seem to disappear entirely from the region. This is seen in the coin loss at military sites in between Reece period XII and Reece period XIII. Looking at regional coin loss by the mean for each site type, a few further details can be teased out of the assemblage.

¹⁰⁰ Sommer's (2014) study concerns the coinage from 253-275, working off of Reuter's (2007) end in 254 for the *Raetian* sector of the frontier. Further, this conclusion works in hand with Mathisen's (2011) concept of the facilitation of German settlement in the region by the Gallic Empire, but in contrast with the consensus that archaeologically, the Alemanni did not fully begin settlement in the region until ca. 300 (Drinkwater 2007, 80-83; Fingerlin 1997, 125; Steuer 1997, 149; 1998, 281-285).

6.2.2 General numismatic trends by site type in Southwest Germany

Stray coin loss drops dramatically after Reece period I but regains and maintains the similar levels of coin loss in periods IV and V, followed by a slow decline (*fig. 6.3*). A pattern of low coin loss followed by a spike continues for periods IX-XI, when coin loss seems to stabilize again in the mid-third century in between periods XII-XIII. This is followed by a drop in period XIV, and then a gradual rise from periods XVI-XVII, after which the range of coin loss drops off again before dropping to its lowest levels in period XXI. Thus, by looking solely at the stray finds the coin loss rate actually increases in period XII-XIII, despite being at the end of Roman administration. However, caution must be taken with stray finds as they include coins from antiquarian collections that are supposed to have come from the region but are not securely provenanced.

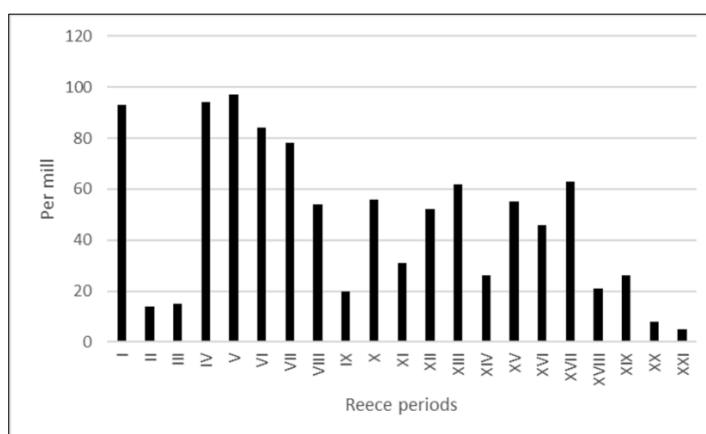


Figure 6. 3: Stray coin finds in Southwest Germany

Military site finds display a similar trend to the stray coin finds up until period XII and XIII, where there is a drop off in coin loss of more than 50% from period XI (*fig. 6.4*). Period XII still has evidence for some coin loss, but by period XIII, there are less than 10 *mills*.

Beginning with period IV, there is a higher rate of coin loss in the extramural settlements than in the forts, which continues until period X. The forts then become the dominant figure in coin loss, which intensifies in periods XI-XIII. Biases are inherent in the assemblage however; 139 forts provided numismatic data, while only nineteen extramural settlements did. Furthermore, it should be noted that the majority of the military assemblage is split between three sites; out of the 13,138 coins from military sites, 1176 come from Hofheim (FMRD V 1089-1094), 2944 come from Saalburg (FMRD V, 1158-1163) and 2069 come from Zugmantel (FMRD V 1217-1222). Nonetheless, the drop in coinage beginning in the late Severan period, followed by an almost complete cessation of coin loss in period XIII is striking, and supports Kortüm's (1996, 39; 1998, 45-49, 59) observations that by the 250s, coins were no longer circulating in sizable quantities at military sites in the region.

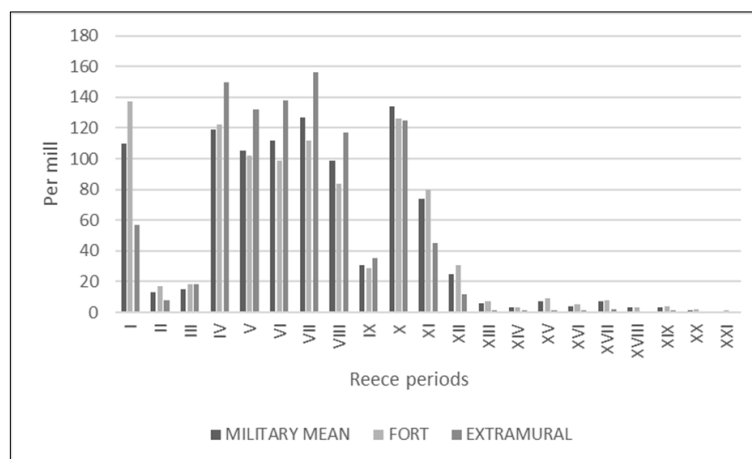


Figure 6. 4: Military coin finds in Southwest Germany

The pattern for coin loss from towns differs from stray finds and military sites, in that there is a smaller spike in period I, followed by a decline in coin loss after the coin loss spikes again in period IV (*fig. 6.5*). This decline continues through to period IX, where there is a spike in period X back to the same level as period VIII. Although the rate of coin loss drops more than 50% in period XI, it increases by 5% in period XII, dropping again slightly in period XIII. The general patterns are similar to what is seen at military sites, but the drop in coinage between period XII and XIII is considerably less severe.

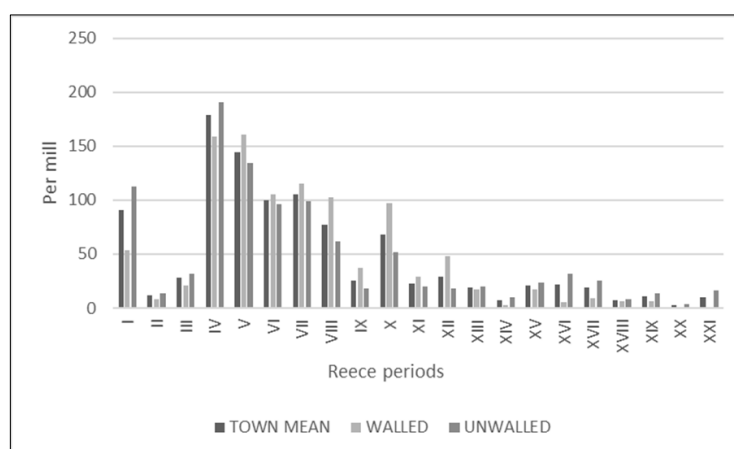


Figure 6. 5: Town coin finds in Southwest Germany

Beginning in period V, towns that would later have town walls begin to overtake unwalled towns in coin loss, a trend which continues through to period XII. In period XIII, unwalled towns begin to overtake walled towns, a trend which lasts until period XXI. It is unlikely that predominance of coin loss at walled towns has anything to do with the walls themselves, which were erected in the late second-mid third century.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the shift of a higher rate coin loss from walled and unwalled towns between the first half of the mid-third century

¹⁰¹ See section 5.3.2 for discussion on the dating of town walls

in period XII and the second half in period XIII is largely due to the unbroken coin sequence from Wiesbaden, as 408 of its 1391 coins come from periods XIV-XXI (FMRD V 1251-1268).¹⁰² Furthermore, the higher rate of coin loss in towns from period XI to periods XII-XIII is skewed by finds from Wiesbaden which saw an increase of 26 coins from period XI to XII, Frankfurt-Heddernheim (FMRD V 2260-2275) with an increase of 42 coins, and Rottenburg (FMRD II 3317-3320) with an increase of 21 coins. Of the remaining eighteen towns with published coin lists, only Baden-Baden, Hüfingen, and Bad Wimpfen also saw an increase, with one, two, and three coins, respectively. The remaining sites saw a decrease in coinage from period XI to XII. Therefore, while there is an increase in coin loss in periods XII-XIII, this is due to a small number of sites rather than a general pattern. However, the fact that these sites do have higher rates of coin loss still implies that activity was taking place within the settlements as the mid-third century progressed.

Rural coin loss follows similar trends as seen at military sites, with an initial spike in period I followed by a drop in periods II-III, and then a high spike in period IV that continues through period VIII (*fig. 6.6*). There is a drop in period IX like at other site types, followed by an increase in period X. Different from other site types, however, the rate of coin loss, though dropping by a third between period X and XI, is stable through periods XI-XIII. This is followed by dropping and spiking modestly between periods XIV-XVII before finally tapering off in periods XVIII-XXI. Many of the rural coin finds however do not come from excavation and are largely from sites with known remains of rural settlement or *villae*. The numismatic assemblages on rural sites are usually very small, and the relative number of excavated sites with reference to uninvestigated sites very low compared to military sites and towns. The reliance on finds from unexcavated contexts means that the confidence in interpretation of patterns from other site types in this thesis is not as high with rural sites. However, the stabilization of coin loss through periods XI-XIII does seem to confirm Stribrny's (1989, 478) observations that there was an attempt made to stabilize coinage in the region following the year 260.

¹⁰² For discussion of the unbroken coin sequence at Wiesbaden see section 5.2.2.

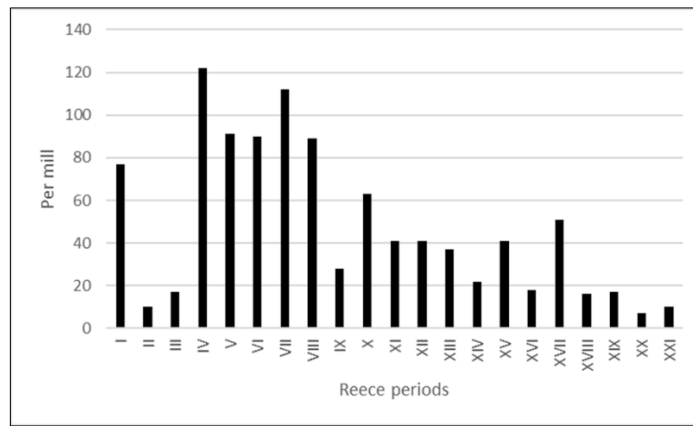


Figure 6. 6: Rural coin finds in Southwest Germany

Barring stray finds, there is a clear drop off in coin loss across sites in the region from the late Severan period (period XI) onwards. However, there are clear differences in the patterns of coin loss. While military sites are almost devoid of coinage by 260 (period XII), towns appear to slightly recover during the first half of the survey period (period XII), then begin to decline in the second half (period XIII). Rural sites seem to enjoy a relatively stable level of coin loss throughout the third century. Thus, it would appear that while coinage was not circulating at military establishments, it was reaching towns or rural sites within the interior. If indeed units slowly dwindled off as they were called for service in campaigns in the East as suggested by Strobel (1999), then this could account for the discrepancy between the rate of coin loss between military sites and towns. However, it is important to look at the mid-third century assemblage before making any final conclusions.

6.2.3 Mid-third century numismatic trends in Southwest Germany

In total, there are 1987 coins from period XII and XIII in the regional assemblage (Appendix B.2).¹⁰³ Of these, the largest number, 1005, came from stray finds, followed by 434 coins from towns, 430 from military sites, and 118 from rural sites. This is first time the mid-third century data for the region has been broken apart and examined, and thus will hopefully also aid in leading further discussion. Exact dating for most of the coins in the mid-third century assemblage is not possible beyond the date range of an emperor's reign, and thus the decision was made to extrapolate the data first and foremost along the general lines of an emperor's reign.¹⁰⁴

First, by looking at the assemblage by regnal periods, it is possible to see in more detail the patterns of coin circulation during the survey period (*fig. 6.7*). The coin loss for the total assemblage declines from the period of 238-244 through the period of 251-253, then stabilizes

¹⁰³ 2010 coins if residual finds from early medieval Germanic graves are counted.

¹⁰⁴ See section 3.7.2 for discussion.

from the period of 253-260 to 270-275. The dips in all assemblages during the periods of 249-251 and 251-253 may be due to their relative brevity, but when added together still do not equal the same amount of coin loss from any other period.

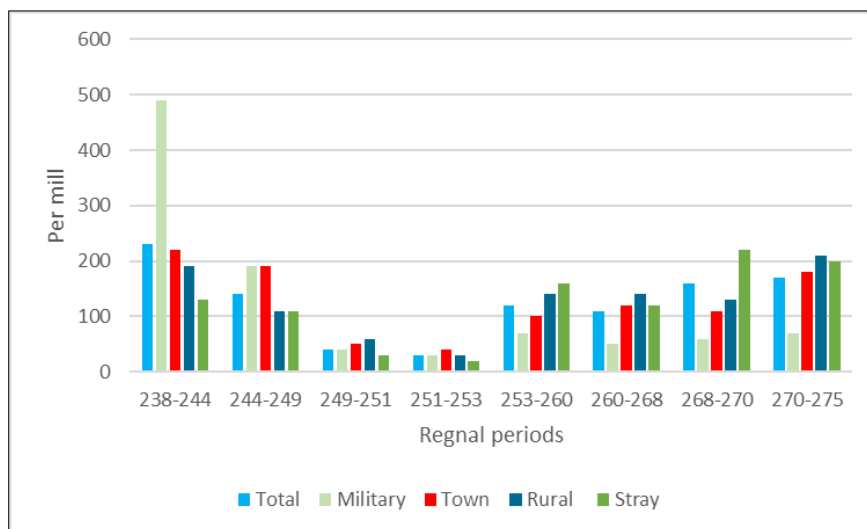


Figure 6. 7: Southwest German mid-third century numismatic assemblage by regnal periods

Military sites see the highest rate of coin loss in the period from 238-244, more than double any other site type, but is then more than halved in the following period 244-249. Although it stabilizes in the periods from 253-260 to 270-275, it does not reach even half of what it was prior to 249-251. Furthermore, when looking at the differences between the fort and extramural settlements, there is a sharp increase in coin loss in in extramural settlements over forts in the period 244-249, but the coin loss from extramural settlements is drastically reduced following this period (*fig. 6.8*). In fact, it does not recover and is eclipsed by fort sites. As noted in section 4.3.2, this could be due to the limited number of extramural site assemblages as compared with fort sites, and/or with the grouping of extramural assemblages with the forts themselves. Nonetheless, an important distinction in the numismatic assemblage is clear between continuation of activity within forts after this period, and a lack of activity outside of them post-249.

Towns see a decline in coin circulation over the periods 238-244 to 251-253, which then steadily increases over the periods 253-260 to 270-275, almost reaching the same level of coin loss in 270-275 as in 244-249. Likewise, rural sites and stray finds follow a similar trajectory of decline over the first four periods, but then eclipse all other find types beginning in 253-260. Stray finds predominate in the periods 253-260 to 268-279 but are overtaken slightly by rural finds in the final period of 270-275.

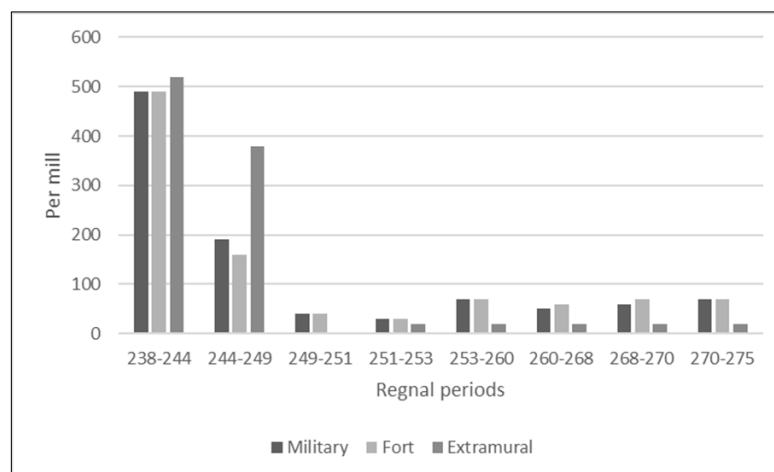


Figure 6. 8: Southwest German mid-third century military numismatic assemblage by regnal periods

Some general comments can be made on the mid-third century assemblage based on the regnal periods. The steady rise in find types over the periods from 260-268 to 270-275 again agree with Stribny's (1989, 478) conclusion that there was a stabilization of the monetary supply during the period of the Gallic Empire from 260-275. The drop in coin loss at military sites in 249-251 and 251-253 does recover, but it does not bounce back near prior levels. Thus, the data further agrees with Kortüm's (1996, 39; 1998, 45-49, 59) assertion that monetary circulation began to disappear at military sites beginning in the 250s under Trajan Decius. Explanation for this drop in coinage has been attributed to a possible lack of population in the hinterland from which to recruit new soldiers (Nuber 1990, 62-64). Moreover, the drop in coin loss pre-dates Reuter's (2007; 2012, 316-317; 2015) Germanic invasion of the *Raetian* frontier in 254, but it does not necessarily discredit the idea. Furthermore, in the period 270-275, finds across towns, rural sites, and stray finds even out, with military sites still the least represented in the assemblage. Thus, while coins are still finding their way into the region during the reign of Aurelian in the Central Empire and the Tetrici in the Gallic Empire, military sites largely appear absent. Although a system of 'payment in kind' for military garrisons is entirely possible, given the date range of 270-275, it is more probable that the garrisons at these installations were no longer occupying them in strength.

Additionally, coinage from the Central Empire predominates during the survey period across all sites (*fig. 6.9*), with Gallic Empire coinage making up 19% of rural finds and 20% of stray finds, but no more than 16% in any other capacity. These low numbers leave the suggestion that the Gallic Empire was responsible for sustained influx of coinage (Sommer 2014) in doubt. Bronze coinage is also low during the survey period never reaching above 14% (*fig. 6.10*). As noted in section 3.3.1, the lack of bronze coinage in the mid-third century in the

Western Empire is not out of the ordinary, as by the time of Philip the Arab it had all but been eliminated.

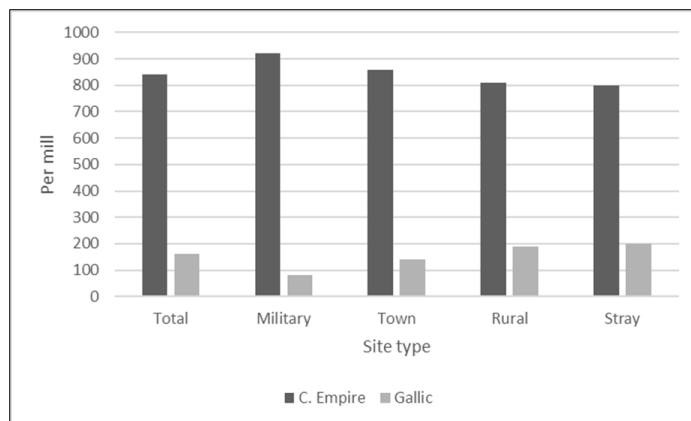


Figure 6. 9: Southwest German mid-third century numismatic assemblage by origin

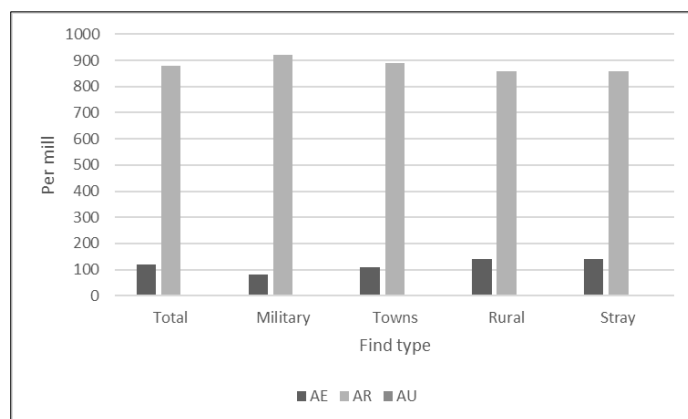


Figure 6. 10: Southwest German mid-third century numismatic assemblage by base metal

6.2.4 General numismatic conclusions for Southwest Germany

Overall, a few conclusions can be made about the numismatic assemblage for Southwest Germany. In general, there appears to be a severe drop in the supply of coinage in the 250s, but this is recovered by the 260s, as noted by Stribny (1989, 478). The evidence for this stabilization, however, consists mainly of stray finds and rural finds. The drop in coinage at military sites is not recovered in any significant way after the reigns of Trajan Decius and Trebonianus Gallus. While not completely devoid of coinage after this period, the supply is negligible. Whether this is fully due to events on the *Raetian* frontier is debatable, as the largest numismatic assemblages come from the Taunus and Wetterau regions, and Zugmantel and Saalburg in particular. However, this factor cannot be entirely ruled out. All find types are affected by this, but towns recover to pre-249 levels by 270-275 in the Aurelianic period, and rural and stray finds increase to their highest levels in the survey period. Thus, there are clearly different factors at work between site types, especially military and civilian. The

lower levels of coinage at military sites may initially be due to a ‘payment in kind’ system, but a reduction in garrisons or abandonment are also possible factors. However, the steady recovery of site finds from 253-275 suggest that the general patterns of coin circulation are not compatible with the traditional *Limesfall* narrative of a catastrophic end to Roman control of the region in 260. Moreover, the low level of Gallic Empire coinage in the general assemblage raises questions as to whether the Gallic Empire took control of the region for more than a nominal period of time.

6.3 Mid-third century coin hoards from Southwest Germany

As coin hoards associated with sites were already covered on a site by site basis in sections 4.6, 4.11, 5.6, and 5.12, this section serves as a brief overview of the entire corpus of data in the region and its implications for activity (*fig. 6.11*). There is a total of 30 known coin hoards from Southwest Germany, eighteen of which are associated with sites mentioned in the current study (Appendix B.3; *tab. 6.1*). All but three of the locations with hoards only contain single hoards. The site with the largest number of hoards, Niederbieber, contained four hoards, while the Mainz-Kastel and Ladenburg both had two hoards each. Outside of a few studies, hoards are notably absent from the discussion of the mid-third century in Southwest Germany, save for the usage of coin dating site occupation. Only eleven of the 30 hoards came from excavation, and only fourteen were able to be fully identified. Only six examples both came from excavation and were fully identified; Gunzenhausen (FMRD I 5057), Kösching II (FMRD I 1115), Zugmantel II (FMRD V 1226), Büßlingen (Heiligmann-Batsch 1997, 51-59), and Niederbieber I and II (Ritterling 1901). In further evidence of a preference for excavating military sites, all of the complete hoards from excavation come from military sites except Büßlingen.

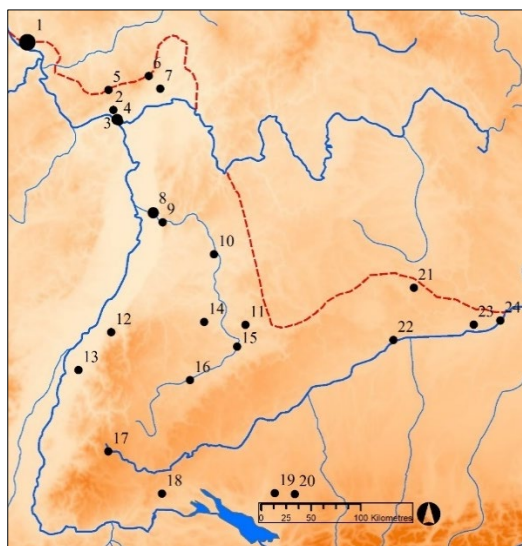


Figure 6. 11: Mid-third century coin hoards in Southwest Germany

1. Niederbieber (NB includes four hoards) 2. Wiesbaden 3. Mainz-Kostheim 4. Mainz-Kastel (NB includes two hoards) 5. Zugmantel 6. Saalburg 7. Frankfurt-Niedereschbach 8. Ladenburg (NB includes two hoards) 9. Heidelberg-Neuenheim 10. Bad Wimpfen 11. Geradstetten 12. Baden-Baden 13. Sand 14. Ditzingen 15. Köngen 16. Rottenburg 17. Furtwangen 18. Büßlingen 19. Schlier-Oberankenreute 20. Kißlegg-Unterhorgen 21. Weißenburg 22. Donauwörth 23. Kösching 24. Inrsing

6.1 Interpretation of Southwest German hoards

Despite this, some inferences have been made about the pieces of the assemblage, both in smaller, regional contexts, and as part of larger hoarding patterns in the western provinces. Blanchet's (1900) original study linking numismatic hoards in the Gallic provinces set a trend to link all evidence of coin hoarding in the mid-third century to Germanic invasions of Roman territory. This was followed by Ritterling (1901, 117) in his interpretation of Niederbieber I and II, who tied the end of the site to their deposition and a supposed Germanic attack. Later, the discovery of the hoards in the extramural settlements at Kösching and Gunzenhausen led to a theory of a Germanic invasion of the *Raetian* frontier in 242/242 (Kellner 1953). This was despite the already-known hoard found within the fort at Weißenburg with a potential closing date of 251 (FMRD I 5100). Indeed, these interpretations of both the Niederbieber hoards and the evidence from Gunzenhausen and Kösching has been drawn into question by Okamura (1984, 257-261; 1990, 49-51; 1996), who was doubtful that Germanic agency was responsible for the deposition for the hoards. He instead began the discussion of evidence of civil war between the Gallic and Roman Empires at Niederbieber and ascribed the *Raetian* hoards to troops departing for the Persian campaigns of Gordian III.¹⁰⁵ Kos (1995), examined the complete hoards found in *Raetia* in the period immediately after 260 in order to assess how much relevant the line 'sub imperatore Gallieno, *Raetia amissa...*' from the

¹⁰⁵ See section 4.6.1 for Niederbieber and section 4.11.1 for Gunzenhausen and Kösching.

Panegyrici Latini 8((V) 10.4) truly was. His study utilized the hoards from Schlier-Oberankenreute (FMRD II 3153), Ditzingen (FMRD II 4296), Irsing (FMRD I 2045), Donauwörth (FMRD I 7071), and Kißlegg-Unterhorgen (FMRD II 3338) as well as hoards from south of the Danube. Kos (1995, 132) tended to side with the upper date of coins with long date ranges but noted the difficulties of interpreting hoards that were incomplete or not totally identified, such as Schlier-Oberankenreute and Kißlegg-Unterhorgen. Still taking a historical approach, he still posited a Germanic raid into the province of *Raetia*, but in the early 270s (Kos 1995, 142-144).

These interpretations involve the concepts of warfare or violence in their discussions of the hoard material with little consideration to other factors, despite three decades of scholarship challenging the traditional interpretations of hoarding as a phenomenon related to fear and violence (Reece 1988; Millett 1994). The most exhaustive scholarship of the region's hoards is Haupt's (2001) study of third century coin hoards from Gaul and the two Germanies. In it he devotes over 20 pages to the different possibilities for the deposition and non-retrieval of hoards in the region (Haupt 2001, 59-80). Although the area of *Germania Superior* east of the Rhine is treated differently from the rest of the province, specific conclusions for the region are not specifically given. However, he does reach the conclusion that the historical interpretation of hoarding patterns with Germanic invasions during the century are in most cases without merit and not provable (Haupt 2001, 239).

Given previous interpretation of the material, it is important to summarize what can be said with certainty. While 24 of the 30 hoards in the survey area could potentially date to the year 260 or before, the seven hoards potentially closing with coins of Gallienus' sole reign or Postumus have a wide date range from 260-268. Furthermore, only the hoards from Irsing, Donauwörth, and Niederbieber I and II have been fully recovered and identified.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, there appears to be almost as much activity in the period 260-275 as there is in the period from 238-260, with thirteen of the 30 hoards dating from the later period. Of course, the possibility for later deposition remains open, especially for the cases of Heidelberg-Neuenheim (FMRD II 1064), Sand-Appenweier (FMRD II 2100), Geradstetten (FMRD II 4577), and Mainz-Kastel II (FMRD IV 1186), all of which contain unidentified coins. Ultimately, with over half of mid-third century hoards from the region not fully identified and recovered, and two-thirds not found in excavation, their usefulness as evidence

¹⁰⁶ Niederbieber I and II (Ritterling 1901) were identified before the creation of RIC and therefore may be reassessed with more clarity. They are part of one of the last remaining volumes of FMRD to be published, and the hope is that the reworking of these hoards will provide a more precise dating of the coins.

to inform the archaeological narrative is problematic at best. They are, however, another indicator of activity in the region well into the later period of the mid-third century and perhaps beyond.

Hoard Name	Closing Date	Fully Recovered/Identified	Found in Excavation	Contents as known	Total
Hoards closing with Gordian III					
Saalburg II	238	NO	NO	24 CU, 609 AR, ?	633
Gunzenhausen	241	YES	YES	307 D, 2 AN	309
Koesching II	241	YES	YES	240 D	240
Rottenburg	242	YES	NO	9 HS	9
Hoards closing with Philip the Arab					
Bad Wimpfen	244	YES	NO	11 AR	11
Koengen	246	NO	YES	447 D, 168AN, 34?	649
Mainz-Kostheim	247	NO	NO	8 AN	8
Mainz-Kastel I	248	NO	NO	50 D, 13 AN	63
Hoards closing with Trajan Decius					
Ladenburg I	249	YES	NO	50 D, 13 AN, 1 AR	64
Ladenburg II	249	YES	NO	50 D, 18 AN	68
Zugmantel II	249	YES	YES	54 D, 84 AN	138
Hoards closing with Volusian					
Weissenburg	251	NO	YES	30 AN	30
Hoards closing with Valerian/Gallienus Joint Reign					
Frankfurt-Niedereschbach	253	NO	YES	107 AR	107
Schlier-Oberankenreute	253	NO	NO	46 D	46
Niederbieber IV	257	NO	YES	213 D, 43 AN	256
Buesslingen	258	YES	YES	3 HS, 96 AN	99
Wiesbaden II	258	YES	NO	2 D, 10 AN	12
Hoards closing with Gallienus Sole Reign					
Ditingen	260	NO	NO	7 AN	7
Irnsing	260	YES	NO	7 AN	7
Niederbieber I	260	YES	YES	192/193 AN	193
Niederbieber II	260	YES	YES	88 D, 301 AN	309
Niederbieber III	260	NO	YES	889 AN	889
Hoards closing with Postumus					
Donauwoerth	260	YES	NO	11 AN	11
Heidelberg-Neuenheim	260	NO	NO	112 D, 17 AN, 1 AR, 116?	246
Hoards closing with Marius					
Kisslegg-Unterhorgen	268	NO	NO	199 D, 75 AN, ca. 326?	600
Hoards closing with Claudius II					
Sand-Appenweier	269	NO	NO	21 AN, ca. 80?	101
Furtwangen	270	YES	NO	11 AN	11
Hoards closing with Tetricus I					
Baden-Baden	270	NO	NO	48 HS, 1 D, 1 AN	50
Geradstetten	270	NO	NO	?AN	
Mainz-Kastel II	270	NO	NO	13 AN, 5?	18

Table 6. 1: Coin hoards by closing dates in Southwest Germany

6.4 Mid-third century inscriptions in Southwest Germany

There is a total of 38 inscriptions dated to the mid-third century in Southwest Germany (Appendix C). As discussed in section 3.7.3, inscriptions dated to the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235-238) were included to prevent an outlier between the period of study for the thesis and the Severan Dynasty. This section gives a brief overview of the regional assemblage from the Roman period, then places the mid-third century assemblage within its context.

Similar to section 6.2, this is the first time that the epigraphic data has been examined on a regional basis, and thus the hope is that it will spark further discussion.

6.4.1 General epigraphic trends in Southwest Germany

A total of 1302 inscriptions were identified from the Roman period in the region, with the majority, 733, dated to a ‘general Roman’ context, i.e. sometime from the period of Roman occupation (*fig. 6.12*). By far, the largest number of inscriptions are votive in nature, more than twice as many, 353, coming from civilian dedicants, than military ones, with 158. The next sizable subset of inscriptions are funerary inscriptions, with 87 civilian inscriptions and 31 military. Dedicatory and building inscriptions are all predictably low in number, as these usually employ the name of the reigning emperor and any associated titles in their text. Finally, only two milestones were ‘general Roman’.

Five hundred sixty-nine inscriptions were datable in one form or another (*fig. 6.13*). 231 were dated to either the first, second, or third century. The remaining 338 were able to be dated to the Julio-Claudian (Augustan-69), Flavian (69-96), Trajanic/Hadrianic (96-138), Antonine (138-192), and Severan (192-235) dynasties, or the mid-third century (235/8-275). In addition to the 37 inscriptions from the survey period, there is the possibility that the 51 ‘third century’ inscriptions could in part date from the mid-third century, but the evidence was inconclusive to securely place them within the context.¹⁰⁷ Overall, the mid-third century assemblage is one of the smallest, but is notably larger than the Julio-Claudian, Flavian, and Trajanic-Hadrianic assemblage.

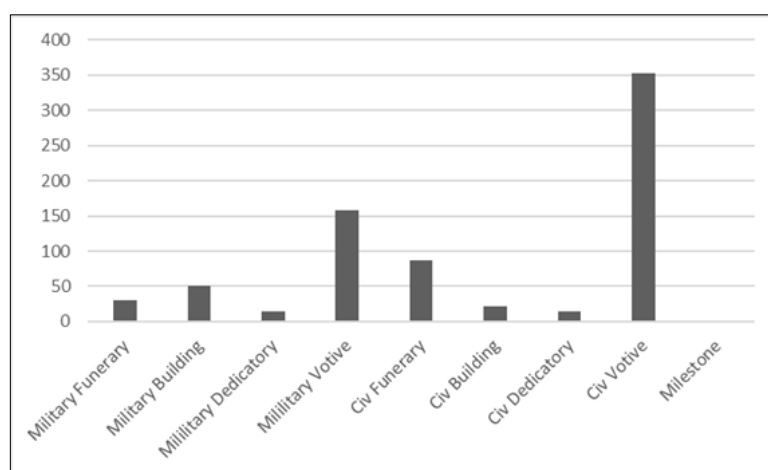


Figure 6. 12: Inscriptions dated as ‘general Roman’ from Southwest Germany

¹⁰⁷ Kortüm (1998, 58) lists a total of 152 third century inscriptions from Southwest Germany, though this total would include a significant number of the 180 Severan inscriptions as well.

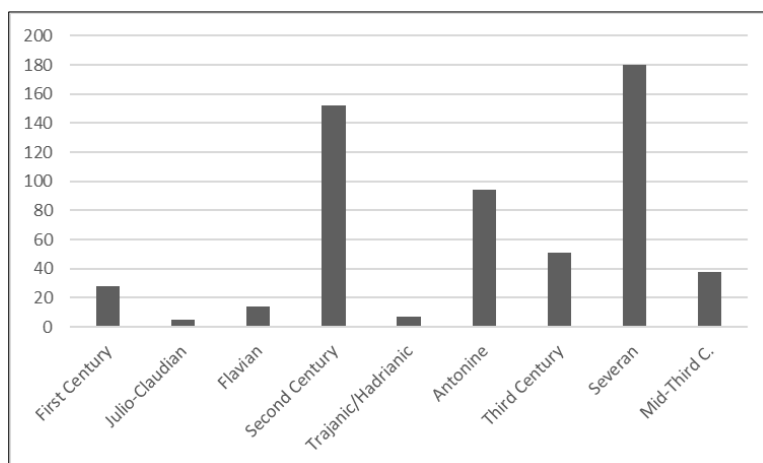


Figure 6. 13: Total number of dated inscriptions

Looking at the 231 inscriptions dated to a century, there are 125 civilian inscriptions (*fig. 6.14*) and 106 military inscriptions (*fig. 6.15*). Votive inscriptions make up the largest amount of the assemblage in both civilian and military contexts, except in the first century, when funerary inscriptions predominate, but in small numbers overall. Like the general Roman category, building and dedicatory inscriptions are relatively low in number, due to the dating-friendly information usually included in the inscription. Overall, the second century predominates both the first and third centuries in material, which may be expected as it is the only period where region is intensively occupied throughout.

Out of the 338 inscriptions dated to either a dynastic period or the mid-third century, the majority, 224 inscriptions, came from military contexts (*fig. 6.16*), while 73 came from civilian contexts, and 41 milestones (*fig. 6.17*).

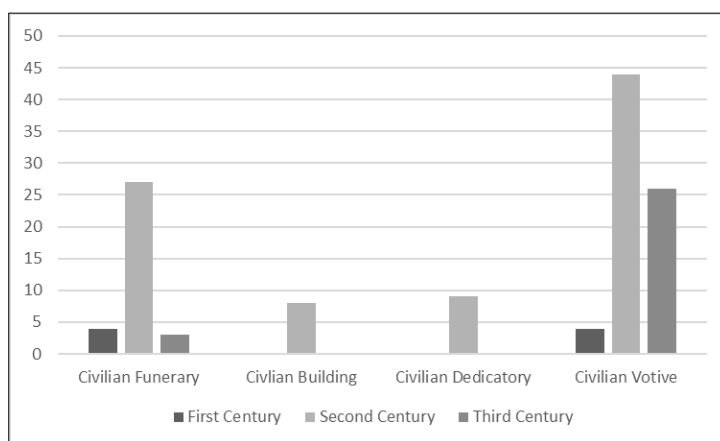


Figure 6. 14: Civilian inscriptions dated by century

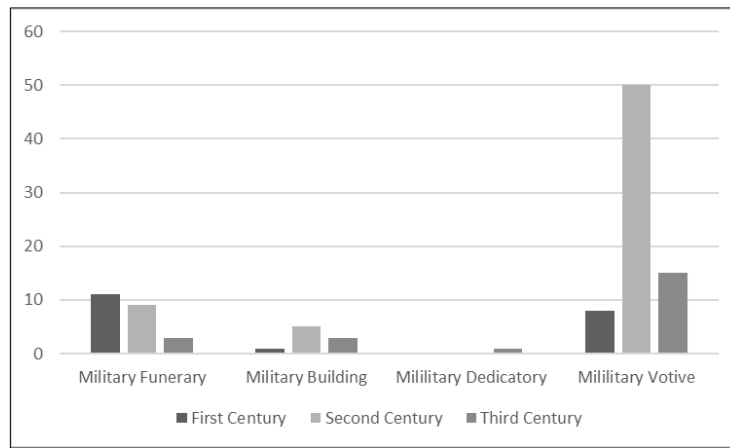


Figure 6. 15: Military inscriptions dated by century

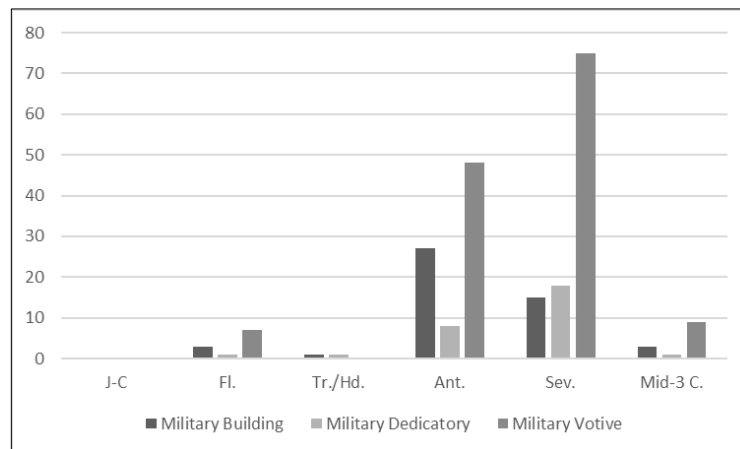


Figure 6. 16: Military inscriptions dated by dynastic period

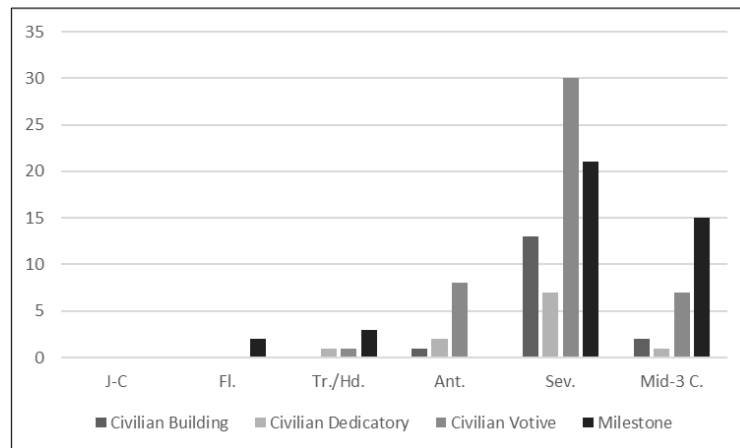


Figure 6. 17: Civilian inscriptions and milestones dated by dynastic period

Examining the military inscriptions, the Antonine period sees the largest spike in building inscriptions, followed by the Severan period. Conversely, the Severan period has the largest amount of both dedicatory and votive inscriptions, followed by the Antonine period. There are no dated inscriptions from the Julio-Claudian period, with just one building and one dedicatory inscription each from the Trajanic/Hadrianic period. The mid-third century has almost the same number of inscriptions in each category as the Flavian period, with each

period having three building inscriptions and one dedicatory inscription. The Flavian period has seven votive inscriptions and the mid-third century has nine. Thus, there is a clear spike in epigraphic activity from military contexts in the Antonine and Severan periods, followed by a severe drop in epigraphic material from the mid-third century. This follows the general trends established by Mrozek (1972) and MacMullen (1982), which noted the highest number of inscriptions in the Western Empire during the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211). Decline in frequency began during the reign of Caracalla (211-217), reaching its nadir during the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251).

Unlike the military assemblage, inscriptions from civilian contexts see a slow increase from the Flavian period, with only two milestones, to the Severan period, which has a total of 71 inscriptions, 21 of which are milestones. The largest category is votive inscriptions from the Severan period, with a total of 30. There is a drop in the number of inscriptions from the Severan period to the mid-third century. However, the mid-third century contains the second largest amount of building inscriptions, though these are only two in number, after the Severan period and the second largest number of milestones, at fifteen. Furthermore, the mid-third century has the third largest number of votive inscriptions, seven, after the Severan and Antonine periods, respectively. Looking solely at the epigraphic data, there is considerably more mid-third century material than any other period except for the Severan dynasty. Thus, it is necessary to examine the mid-third century assemblage on its own.

6.4.2 Mid-third century epigraphic trends in Southwest Germany

The assemblage of 38 mid-third century inscriptions are found across 20 different locations in the survey area (*fig. 6.18*). Milestones were by far the largest represented inscription type, with fifteen. Consequently, these are also confined to the sites with the two largest numbers of inscriptions; six milestones from Heidelberg ranging in date from 236-253¹⁰⁸, and Ladenburg with five, ranging in date from 238-253.¹⁰⁹ The site with the next largest amount, Frankfurt-Heddernheim includes the erection of a Jupiter column in 239 (CIL XIII 7352) and the restoration of another Jupiter column in 240 (CIL XIII 7352), as well as an altar erected to Mithras by the aedile of the town in 245 (CIL XIII 7370=CIMRM 1100, 1202), and a fragment of a building inscription dated to 241 by consular dates (CIL XIII 7376).

¹⁰⁸ At Heidelberg: 236 under Maximinus Thrax, CIL XIII 9106=CIL XVII, 2, 638=RSO 214; 238 under Gordian III, CIL XIII 9107=CIL XVII, 2, 639=RSO 216; 245 under Philip the Arab, CIL XIII 9108=CIL XVII, 2, 640; RSO 217; 249 under Trajan Decius, CIL XIII 9109=CIL XVII, 2, 641=RSO 218; 250 under Trajan Decius, CIL XIII 9110=CIL XVII, 2, 642; 253 under Valerian and Gallienus, CIL XIII 9111=CIL XVII, 2, 643=RSO 643.

¹⁰⁹ At Ladenburg: 238 under Gordian III, CIL XIII 9099=CIL XVII, 2, 631=RSOR 085; 245 under Philip the Arab, CIL XIII 9100=CIL XVII, 2, 632=RSOR 086; 249 under Trajan Decius, CIL XIII 9101=CIL XVII, 2, 633=RSOR 087; 250 under Trajan Decius, CIL XIII 9102=CIL XVII, 2, 633=RSOR 088; 253 under Valerian and Gallienus, CIL XIII 9103=CIL XVII, 2, 634=RSOR 089.

Furthermore, Niederbieber has a total of three inscriptions, with a votive inscription to a nymph dated 238-244 (CIL XIII 7758), the base of a statue of a votive sculpture of the *genius vexillariorum et imaginiferorum* dated to 239 by consular dates (CIL XIII 7753), and another inscription to the *genium signiferorum* dated to 246 by consular dates (CIL XIII 7754). Between these four sites, almost half, or sixteen of the 38 inscriptions from the survey period are accounted for. Indeed, the concentration of epigraphic activity during the survey period appears to be centred in the northwestern corner of the region, with the exceptions being milestones from Baden-Baden from 238 (CIL XIII 9119, CIL XVII, 2, 648) and Frizolheim dated to 244 (CIL XVII, 2, 653=AE 1935, 104), and dedicatory inscription from Tübingen dated 236-238 (CIL XIII 6375=CILXIII 9083=CIL XVII, 2, 655). The epigraphic evidence from these three sites would imply the continuation of civic life and imperial investiture in the region up until the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus at the earliest.

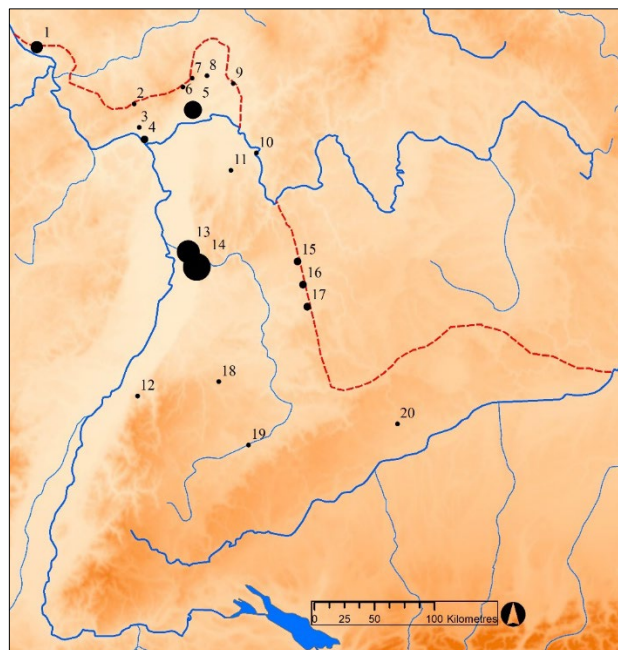


Figure 6. 18: Inscriptions by quantity. 1. Niederbieber (NB: Three inscriptions) 2. Zugmantel 3. Wiesbaden 4. Mainz-Kastel (NB: Two inscriptions) 5. Hedderheim (NB: Four inscriptions) 6. Saalburg 7. Kapersburg 8. Friedberg 9. Altenstadt 10. Stockstadt am Main 11. Groß-Umstadt 12. Baden-Baden 13. Ladenburg (NB: Five inscriptions) 14. Heidelberg (NB: Six inscriptions) 15. Osterburken (NB: Two inscriptions) 16. Jagsthausen (NB: Two inscriptions) 17. Öhringen (NB: Two inscriptions) 18. Frizolheim 19. Tübingen 20. Hausen ob Lonthal

Only one inscription is known from the Raetian sector of the region, a building inscription from the reign of Gallienus, spoliated in a church at Hausen ob Lonthal (CIL III 5933=IBR 202). Though originally dated to 256-268, Eck (2012, 82-83) has recently dated the inscription to at least 260 based on the reading of INVICTVS AV[G], noting that the potential lack of a second 'G' in the inscription would indicate that it was erected during his sole reign. The provenance of this inscription is clearly in question. Though Scholz (2009, 471-472)

wondered whether or not this inscription could be associated with the late military construction at Faimingen, Sommer (2015, 58) deemed the inscription too late to be associated with the feature. Regardless, the presence of a late inscription of Gallienus in *Raetia* is a striking reminder that not all sources of evidence fit the established narrative.

Looking at the mid-third century assemblage by emperor, some further inferences can be made (*tab. 6.2*). Evidence for all types of inscription except milestones and the building inscription from Hausen ob Lonthal disappear in the reign of Trajan Decius. The only two examples dated to his reign outside of milestones are two military votive inscriptions one from Stockstadt am Main dated to 251 (CIL XIII 6658=RSOR 15) and Kapersburg (CIL XIII 7440). While Scholz (2006, 74-78) initially called the dating of the Kapersburg inscription into question, he concluded that the dating under the reign of Trajan Decius could not be ruled out. Indeed, the highest concentration of inscriptions is under the reign of Philip the Arab, totaling ten of the 38 inscriptions. These trends generally follow those of the Western Empire, with Mrozek (1973, 114-116) noting that reign of Trajan Decius seems to be the exact period when the epigraphic habit reaches its lowest point. Nonetheless, the fact that six different milestones were erected after this crucial point in the epigraphic habit indicates that infrastructure was still intact into the 250s.

Mil. Votive	Mil. Building	Mil. Dedicatory	Civ. Votive	Civ. Building	Civ. Dedicatory	Milestone	Total
Inscriptions from the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235-238)							
1	1	1	1		1	2	7
Inscriptions from the reign of Gordian III (238-244)							
3	1		4	1		3	12
Inscriptions from the reign of Philip the Arab (244-249)							
3	1		2			4	10
Inscriptions from the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251)							
2						4	6
Inscriptions from the joint reign of Valerian/Gallienus (253-260)							
						2	2
Inscriptions from the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268)							
				1			1
Total count of inscriptions							
9	3	1	7	2	1	15	38

Table 6. 2: Mid-third century inscriptions in Southwest Germany by category

6.4.3 General epigraphic conclusions for Southwest Germany

Looking back at the overall epigraphic assemblage, and the mid-third century's material in context, a few conclusions can be made. While the majority of inscriptions in the region are not datable to a more secure context than 'Roman', the 569 inscriptions give some insight into the

epigraphic habit of the region. Most inscriptions dated to the third century are votive in nature and come from both in military and civilian contexts. An overall increase in the epigraphic output in the region reached its peak under the Severan dynasty from 193-235 followed by a severe drop in inscriptions in the mid-third century. This, however, is due to a cessation of epigraphic activity in military contexts. Inscriptions from civilian contexts return to similar levels as the Antonine period, while the second largest number of dated milestones comes from the mid-third century. Outside of milestones, there is also a drop in the number of inscriptions from the reign of Trajan Decius onward, but this is indicative of Empire-wide trends. However, the fact that the evidence for milestones continues into the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus, would imply that the administration still had a vested interest in the upkeep of the infrastructure well into the 250s, with clear evidence for concentration of civic life and military activity into at least the mid-240s.

6.5 Conclusion

After examining the evidence a few concluding remarks can be made. There appear to have been problems with supplying the region with coin during the reigns of Trajan Decius and Trebonianus Gallus. The situation was remedied under the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus, which continued until the reign of Aurelian. This is most prevalent in stray and rural finds, but evidence from towns also shows that there is a sustained influx of coinage after the initial period of crisis. While military sites do follow the general trends, the rate of coin loss is much lower than other site types from 253 onwards. This could be indicative of a payment in kind system or a reduction in the size of garrisons manning the forts.

Unfortunately, the evidence at present is not nuanced to fully interpret this discrepancy between military and other sites. The general rebound in coin circulation suggests that the region was not the victim of a catastrophic event in 260, going against the traditional *Limesfall* narrative. It is also questionable whether the Gallic Empire was the main catalyst for the influx of coinage into the region post-260 (Stribrny 1989, 478; Witschel 2011, 41), due to the generally low levels of issues from the breakaway region in the assemblage. The usage of the numismatic record to indicate Germanic activity, either by single coin finds to imply Alemannic resettlement under the aegis of the Gallic Empire (Sommer 2014; Witschel 2011, 41), or Germanic raiding via hoarding patterns (Blanchet 1900; Kellner 1953; Kos 1995) is problematic.

The epigraphic evidence, though reflecting general trends in the epigraphic habit of the Western Empire, gives a unique glimpse into the region. Although there is little epigraphic evidence for civic life after the 240s, four milestones from the joint reign of Valerian and

Gallienus suggest that state investment in the regional infrastructure, at least in the northwestern area of Southwest Germany, continued well into the 250s, possibly accompanied by the attempt to stabilize coin circulation in the region. However, it appears that this was ultimately in vain, as coin circulation does not recover to levels previous to Reece period XII. Likewise, there is no further evidence in the epigraphic record, save for the building inscription from Hausen ob Lonthal, the provenance and dating of which is dubious at best.

Part Three: Transylvania

7. Military Sites in Transylvania

7.1 Introduction

After looking at the evidence across site reports and the numismatic and epigraphic assemblages for Southwest Germany, the equivalent data from Transylvania must now be examined. A total of 31 military sites were included in the study, including the two legionary fortresses at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and Turda-*Potaissa* and 29 auxiliary forts. In addition to being fewer in number, the robustness of publication and investigation of military sites in Transylvania is significantly lower than that in Southwest Germany. Consequently, differentiating between extramural settlement data and fort data was not possible except for at Veşel-*Micia* and Ilişua. Therefore, the decision was made to not separate out the military site assemblage between fort and extramural settlements.¹¹⁰ While there is extensive publication on the extramural settlements at Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, Turda-*Potaissa*, and Moigrad-*Porolissum*, these are included in the section on towns, as Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and Moigrad-*Porolissum* had reached the rank of *municipium* under Septimius Severus, while Turda-*Potaissa* had reached the rank of *colonia*. The modern town of Alba Iulia contains three different Roman settlements; the legionary fortress and associated *municipium* in the town proper, and the *colonia*, due immediately south of the modern town in the suburb of Partoş. Therefore, the legionary fortress and *municipium* are from here referred to as Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, while the *colonia* is referred to as Partoş-*Apulum*.

Unfortunately, due to keyhole and non-stratigraphic excavation, sporadic publication, and a lack of contextual information for most finds, there is little evidence at military sites that hold any correlation to the archaeological narrative. By far, the most visible mid-third century activities at military sites are construction and repair, as this has been dated in the past by the use of spoliated inscriptions or coin finds from contemporary features. More subtle phenomena, such as demolition, are not easily perceptible in the archaeological record. Thus, dating of sites outside of a ‘third century’ context in many cases is not possible, and this is usually based on the data for the construction of the stone fort. However, the evidence suggests that the normal routines of upkeep and repair likely continued inside forts well into

¹¹⁰ The temple complex at Veşel-*Micia* was given its own monograph (Alicu 2004), however, it is recent excavation in the extramural settlement of a sealed pit containing a large ceramic assemblage and a coin of Philip the Arab that provides the most promising information (Gamureac 2014). The discovery of an inscription (AE 2006, 1130) in the extramural settlement at Ilişua mentioning the ‘[geni]o terri[tor(ii) A]rcoba(darensis)’ led Nemeti (2014) to posit on the scope and complexity of the settlement, but physical evidence is still fleeting. Furthermore, while Benea (2003) gives an overview of the extant structural plans of extramural settlements for Roman *Dacia* as a whole, the excavation data is limited mainly to *Tibiscum*, which is just west outside of the survey area.

the mid-third century, though if this continued into the very final phases of the region or indeed after is not possible to detect.

Moving onward, sites are examined beginning with the legionary fortresses at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and Turda-*Potaissa*, and then are worked through in a clockwise fashion beginning in the southwest with Vețel-*Micia*, loosely following the precedent set by Gudea (1997d).¹¹¹

7.2 Dating criteria for military sites

A total of seven military sites had enough information to give a ceramic dating outside of the typical second-third century dating of ceramics in the region. These included the legionary fortresses at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and Turda-*Potaissa*, as well as Vețel-*Micia*, Gilău, Buciumi, Moigrad-*Porolissum*, and Comolău. Fifteen sites had either evidence of mid-third century coinage or inscriptions. The remaining eight sites had no datable coinage or inscriptions (*fig. 7.1*).

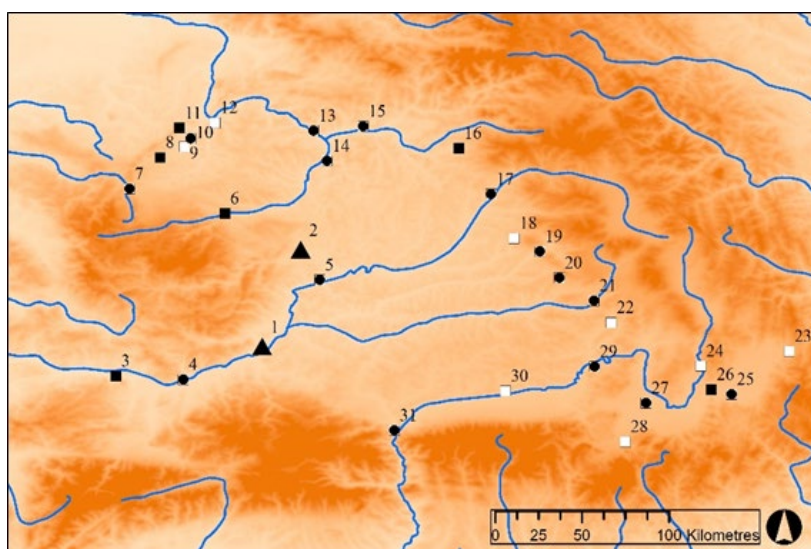


Figure 7. 1: Datable material from military sites in Transylvania. Key: Triangle: Fortresses with datable ceramic material; Black square: forts with datable ceramic material; Black circle: forts with datable numismatic and/or epigraphic material; White square: forts with no datable material

1. Alba Iulia-*Apulum* 2. Turda-*Potaissa* 3. Vețel-*Micia* 4. Cigmău 5. Războieni 6. Gilău 7. Bologa 8. Buciumi 9. Românași 10. Romita 11. Moigrad-*Porolissum* 12. Tihău 13. Cășeiu 14. Gherla 15. Ilișua 16. Orheiu Bistriței 17. Brâncovenești 18. Calugăreni 19. Sărățeni 20. Inlăceni 21. Odorheiu Secuiesc 22. Sânpaul 23. Brețcu 24. Olteni 25. Boroșneu Mare 26. Comolău 27. Feldioara 28. Râșnov 29. Hoghiz 30. Cincșor 31. Boița

7.2.1 Military sites with ceramic dating

Beginning with the legionary fortress in Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, modern excavation found that the ceramic assemblage dated from the late second to first half of the third century based on similar finds from the nearby town at Partoș (Istrate 2008, 61). While Găzduc et. al (2009,

¹¹¹ Though Gudea (1997d) handles forts not explicitly on the frontier in a different order, for the sake of clarity and consistency, this study will work through everything in the aforementioned fashion.

114 nr. 147) gives the latest coin from the fortress as an antoninianus of Trebonianus Gallus dated 251-253, Moga (1990-1993, 220) states that an antoninianus of Valerian for Corenlia Saloninia was found in the northern sector of the fortress.¹¹² The latest inscriptions known from the fortress mentioning the *Legio XIII Gemina* are a pair of votive altars from the reign of Gordian III, 238-244 (CIL III 940=AE 2010, 1376=IDR III/5 31; CIL III 1017=IDR III/5, 81). However, there is a general difficulty with attributing many inscriptions known from either Alba Iulia or *Apulum*. Many were taken during the Hapsburg period to Budapest or Vienna and have unclear findspots. This means they could come from either the legionary fortress, the adjacent *Municipium Septimium Apulense*, or the nearby *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis* at Partoș. While there are later inscriptions known from ‘Alba Iulia’, the decision was made in this case to attribute the latest inscription mentioning the military unit for the fortress.¹¹³

The ceramic assemblage found during modern excavation in the area of the *praetentura sinistra* of the legionary fortress at Turda-Potaissa was found to contain 71% ‘common use ceramics’ and 29% fine wares (Andone-Rotaru et al. 2017, 106). 70% of the fine ware assemblage was East Gaulish, especially Rheinzabern. Though giving no list or dating criteria, the assemblage was broadly dated to the late-second through mid-third century (Andone-Rotaru et al. 2017, 106). At least one coin of Aurelian dated 270-275 was found in the earlier excavations (Pîslaru 2012, 220 nr. 749). However, the recent excavations found no mid-third century coinage, and stated that the lack of regionally-minted *Provincia Dacia* issues emphasized that the barrack range in the *praetentura sinistra* was likely occupied only into the first half of the third century but no later (Andone-Roatru et al. 2017, 63).¹¹⁴

While the latest inscription from area of Turda-Potaissa to mention the *Legio V Macedonica* is a votive inscription commemorating work on a temple to Deo Azizo Bono P[uero Conserva]tori dated to 256-258 (CIL III 875=ILS 4345), the two latest inscriptions that were found within the fortress were a pair of statue bases, one for *Fortuna* and the other for *Aesculapius* and *Hygia*, found within the rubble of the bath house (Bărbulescu 2012, 189-

¹¹² Moga’s (1990-1993, 220) assertion may be dubious, however, as he assigns the coin a date from 240-257, which would be impossible as the reign of Valerian began in 253.

¹¹³ Indeed, the *Legio XIII Gemina* was moved sometime in the late third century across the Danube to *Ratriaria* (Moga 1985, 30; AE 1938, 104). Likewise, there is mid-third century epigraphic evidence for the legion from a funerary monument at Emona (Moga 1985, 28). The praetorian prefect in 261, Lucius Petronius Taurus Volusianus is also known from epigraphic evidence (CIL XI 1836=ILS 1332). Epigraphic evidence from a *mithraeum* at *Poetovio* might also indicate a detachment in *Pannonia Superior* in the mid-third century (Moga 1985, 28). Further, the legion received the imperial epithets *Gordiana* (CIL III 823, 827=763), *Philippiana* (IDR III/2, 100), and *Galleniana* (CIL III 1560=ILS 3845), likely denoting further military activity in the mid-third century.

¹¹⁴ For discussion of the *Provincia Dacia* coin issues of the mid-third century see sections 3.4.2 and 9.2.3.

191).¹¹⁵ On both statue bases, two lines of text had been chiselled away, which Bărbulescu (2012, 200-201) attributed to the fulfilment of *damnatio memoriae* after the death of Gallienus in 268. However, Piso (2014, 128) has reinterpreted the *damnatio memoriae* as that of the emperor Aemelian, who reigned for a short period in 253 between the death of Trebonianus Gallus and the ascension of Valerian.

While the ceramic evidence for the legionary fortresses is fuzzy at best, there is clear, datable numismatic and epigraphic evidence for activity in both Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and Turda-*Potaissa* during the mid-third century. However, depending on the intensity and complexity of excavation at other military sites, the nature and quality of the evidence varies greatly. The remaining five sites with ceramic evidence are Vețel-*Micia*, Gilău, Buciumi, Moigrad-*Porolissum*, and Comolău.

The most reliably datable ceramic evidence from Vețel-*Micia* comes from a sealed pit in the extramural settlement. The pit contained an assortment of coarse wares and a bronze coin of Philip the Arab dated to 244 (Gamureac 2014, 238). While the importance of the discovery of this sealed context and its relevance for dating ceramics in the late period of the province was noted, only a list of the ceramics is given with no interpretation (Gamureac 2014, 245). Importantly, the ceramics themselves provide little evidence, as vessel forms in the region are given a general date range from the second to third centuries in Roman *Dacia* in general. However, the potential for further study of the vessels found in this sealed context would perhaps help to start the debate on which forms come from later contexts. The latest coin from the site is a *Viminacium* bronze issue of Trajan Decius dated 249-251 (Petac 2011, 334 nr. 632). The latest known inscription is a milestone dated 249-251 (CIL III 8061=IDR III/3 50).

The ceramic evidence from Gilău was given a general dating towards the middle of the third century based on imported and local stamped wares (Isac 1997a, 56; 1997b). The latest coin finds from the site were three *Provincia Dacia* issues under Philip the Arab dated 247-248 (Găzdac and Isac 2007, 179-180, nr. 101-103).

One sherd of Westerndorf Samian, as well as two sherds of Rheinzabern, representing three of the 22 sherds of Samian Ware led Isac (1977, 165) to conclude that the ceramic assemblage at

¹¹⁵ Like the *XIII Gemina*, the *V Macedonica* was moved south of the Danube to *Oescus* at the end of the third century as noted by the *Notitia Dignitatum* (or. Xxviii, 14). The legion is also known to have taken the epithet *Gordiana* (CIL VI 1645), however Bărbulescu (1987, 29) expresses doubt whether it was for military action. Further epigraphic evidence from *Poetovio* (AE 1936, 53-57) denotes that the *V Macedonica* may have sent a detachment to the town as well.

Buciumi pointed to a mid-third century date. The latest coin is an antoninianus of Trebonianus Gallus dated 251-253 (Găzdac and Pripon 2012, 83 nr. 445).

While the Samian assemblage from Moigrad-*Porolissum* does not seem to have provided a mid-third century date, the total assemblage of stamped wares contained 20 sherds dated 241-247 and seven dated 250-275 out of 1035 recorded examples, totalling 2.6% of the entire assemblage (Gudea 1989, 440-472; Filip 2008, 71-72). It is unclear, however, which pieces come from the fort or the *municipium*, with only 'Complexul arheologic Porolissum' given as the general location (Filip 2008). Furthermore, there is no justification for so specific dating of the assemblage, with no discussion of context or criteria to assess the chronology.

Therefore, the dating of the assemblage remains suspect. While Gudea (1986, 151) states that coins of Aurelian are known from the fort, the latest recorded coin from excavation is an antoninianus of Gallienus dated 253-260 (Găzdac and Gudea 2006, 53, nr. 357). Without a secure context for the coin find from Gudea (1986, 151), and its non-inclusion in the site numismatic monograph again leaves the evidence from Moigrad-*Porolissum* suspect. The latest inscription from the fort is a dedicatory inscription to Trajan Decius from 251 which suffered *damnatio memoriae* and was spoliated in repair to the fort (AE 1944, 56=ILD 672).

The so-called *burgus*-like structure at Comolău was originally thought to date to the mid-third century based on the presence of brick stamps of the *Ala Palmyrenorum*, a unit which was not thought to exist until after 250, as well as parallels for the structure at Gornea on the Danube (Horedt 1974, 556-557; 1982, 28-30). However, modern assessment expressed doubt over the Roman dating of the fortification but stated that the ceramics indicated some form of Roman settlement in the mid-third century in the area (Popa and Bordi 2016, 10). The only mid-third century coin known from the area is a generic silver issue of Philip the Arab dated 244-249 (Petac 2011, 315 nr. 511).¹¹⁶

7.2.2 Military sites with numismatic and/or epigraphic dating

Though there is no published ceramics information for the following fifteen sites, either numismatic or epigraphic material provided evidence for mid-third century occupation. These are Cigmău, with an inscription to Philip the Arab dated 245 (CIL III 12573=IDR III/3, 214, Războieni with an antoninianus of Gallienus from 253-258 (Petac 2011, 342 nr. 671; Popovici and Varga 2010), Bologna with a *Provincia Dacia* issue of Philip the Arab from 246-249 (Petac 2011, 340 nr. 659) and four inscriptions dated 238-244 from the reign of Gordian

¹¹⁶ Though Horedt (1982, 30) states that coins from the reign of Aurelian are known from the area, they are not listed.

III (AE 1972, 471-474=ILD 618-621), Romita with four *Provincia Dacia* issues of Philip the Arab dated 247-248 (Petac 2011, 317 nr. 19) and an inscription dated 238-244 (AE 1971, 392=AE 2006, 1124=ILD 653), Cășeiu with an antoninianus of Philip the Arab dated 247-248 (Găzduc and Isac 2007, 125 nr. 113) and two inscriptions from 143 under Gordian III (AE 1957, 326=ILD 715; AE 2006, 1124=ILD 769), Gherla with an antoninianus of Aurelian dated 272-273 (Petac 2011, 291 nr. 349), Ilișua with an antoninianus dated 249 to (Găzduc et al. 2011, 125 nr. 113) and an inscription dated to 244-249 (AE 2006, 1127), under Philip the Arab, Brâncovenești with a *Provincia Dacia* issue dated 246-249 under Philip the Arab (Petac 2011, 271 nr. 22), Sărățeni with an antoninianus of Gordian III dated 214 (Petac 2011, 320 nr. 538), Inlăceni with a *Provincia Dacia* issue dated 246-247 (Gudea 1979, 198; Petac 2011, 296 nr. 391) and an inscription dated 244-249 (IDR III/4, 269=AE 1988, 973), under Philip the Arab, Odorheiul Secuiesc with a *Provincia Dacia* issue of Philip the Arab dated 246-247 (Zăgreanu and Nyárádi 2011, 237; Petac 2011, 305 nr. 442), Boroșneu Mare with an antoninianus of Aurelian dated 272 (Petac 2011, 270 nr. 211)¹¹⁷, Feldoiara with a sestertius of Philip the Arab dated 244-249 (Gudea 2008b, 235 nr. 28), Hoghiz with a *Viminacium* issue of Philip the Arab dated 246-247 (Petac 2011, 341 nr. 617)¹¹⁸, and Boița, with a now lost hoard from the fort containing 215 coins with a closing date of 238-244 under Gordian III (Suciu 2000, nr. 27; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 9), however no mid-third century coinage was found in excavation (Lupu 1961, 120).¹¹⁹

7.2.3 Military sites with no material dated to the mid-third century

The remaining nine sites, Românași, Tihău, Orheiul Bistriței, Calugăreni, Sânpaul, Brețcu, Olteni, Râșnov, and Cincșor have no dated ceramic, numismatic, or epigraphic finds specifically dated to the mid-third century. In the case of Românași, Orheiul Bistriței, Brețcu, and Râșnov, it was the opinion of the excavators that the forts were occupied into the end of the Roman period (Tamba 1997, 27; Protase 2008, 46; Gudea 1980, 298-299; Gudea and Pop 1971, 66). Protase (1993, 21) claimed to have discovered a bronze brooch dated to the first half of the third century from Tihău, but does not identify it or give further information.

¹¹⁷ This coin was not found in excavation, however, Székely (1975, 346) also states that brick stamps of the *Ala I Gallorum* and the *Ala Palmyrenorum* are proof that the fort was occupied into the mid-third century but gives no further information to substantiate this.

¹¹⁸ While Horedt (1953, 796) stated that the latest coin find from excavation was a bronze issue of Severus Alexander, and the latest coin at that time from the site being a *Viminacium* issue of Gordian III from 240, the Szekler community had a private collection of three coins, which this later issue must come from.

Likewise, Isac (1994) stated that while the fort clearly had at least two phases of occupation, erosion over time had made it very difficult to excavate.

Even in the most ideal circumstances, the ceramic dating for military sites in Transylvania is very spotty, leaving almost all secure dating resting on the presence of numismatic and epigraphic material. In many instances, which coins come from excavation and which come from the general area is also difficult to discern outside of the few numismatic site monographs that exist.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, there is indication for some form of activity at all but the nine sites without datable material. While there are later phases at Românași, Orheiul Bistriței, Brețcu, and Râșnov, all that is given is a *terminus post quem* of the early third century, based on the evidence for construction of the stone forts. Therefore, after establishing this baseline for datable material culture, it is now important to look at the stratigraphic evidence for activity.

7.2 Construction and repair at military sites

The most visible phenomenon for military sites in the region during the mid-third century is construction and repair. Hügel (2003, 130-151) was the first scholar to consider the significance of this phenomenon. Isac (2008) and Matei (2012; 2015; 2018) have stressed its importance in subsequent analyses. The majority of the evidence cannot be dated with any certainty outside of 'late' in the period of the site's occupation (Hügel 2003, 140-142; Isac 2008, 133). Thus, any dating for stratigraphy is based solely on numismatic and epigraphic evidence. A total of fourteen military sites, however, did display some evidence of construction and/or repair in the region during this period (*fig. 7.2*).

¹²⁰ See section 3.4.2 for discussion.

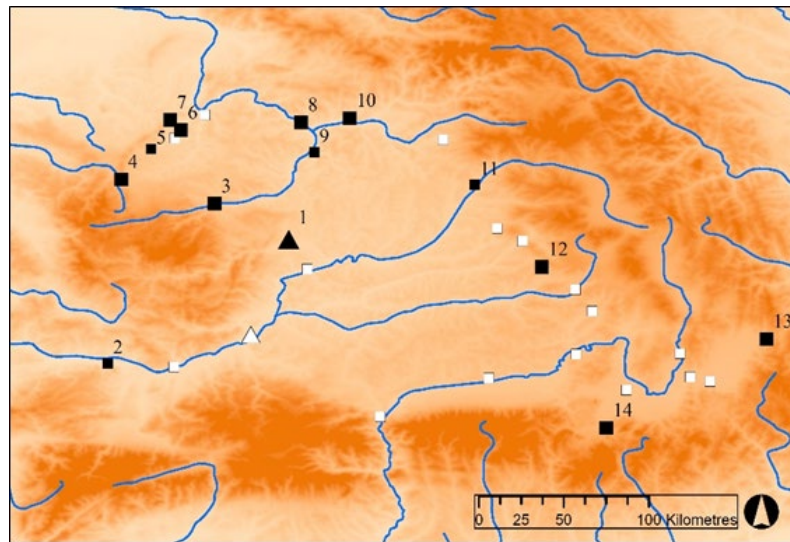


Figure 7. 2: Construction at military sites in Transylvania. Key: Small black square: sites with evidence of repair and/or construction; Large black square: forts with evidence of blocking of fort gates; Large black triangle: fortresses with evidence of blocking of fortress gates.

1. Turda-*Potaissa* 2. Vețel-*Micia* 3. Gilău 4. Bologa 5. Buciumi 6. Romita 7. Moigrad-*Porolissum* 8. Cășeiu 9. Gherla 10. Ilișua 11. Brâncovenești 12. Inlăceni 13. Brețcu 14. Râșnov

7.2.1 Evidence for construction at military sites

At the legionary fortress at Turda-*Potaissa*, construction of a *hypocaust* system in room K of the *principia* based was dated on the discovery of a *bulla* within the system (Bărbulescu 1987, 138-139). Bărbulescu (1987, 138-139) dated this particular *bulla* to the mid-third century, but admits it is largely known from fourth century contexts in *Pannonia*, seemingly to fit it into the established date range of Roman occupation of the region. Furthermore, antiquarian excavations noted that the *porta praetoria* was found to contain many spoliated funerary monuments. Bărbulescu (1987, 29) states this is evidence for repair to the gate towers during the supposed Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab, but gives no evidence to connect the two archaeologically. The *porta decumana* was also temporarily blocked off, but then reopened. Despite a lack of dating evidence, this was also tied into the Carpic Wars (Bărbulescu 1987, 29-30, 111-112). Tempting again as it may be to link such phenomena to historically attested events, there is nothing to prove this association.

The construction of a wall overlaid a sealed pit containing a coarse ware ceramic assemblage and the coin of Philip the Arab in the extramural settlement at Vețel-*Micia*. This was considered to represent the final phases of Roman occupation by the excavators (Gamureac 2014, 237-238). Wall construction over this sealed context gives evidence of one of the rare examples for construction post-250 in the region. Though the evidence is admittedly

fragmentary without a larger scale excavation, it does nonetheless indicate new construction in the region at a time where there is hardly any that is clearly visible.

At Gilău, multiple instances of mid-third century construction were noted by the excavator. The repair of the *agger* towards the *via saguaris* at Gilău with a 0.6m high and 6m wide berm was given a *terminus ante quem* of 244-246 based on a *Viminacium* antoninianus of Philip the Arab dated 244-246 (Isac 1997a, 52). A structure was also erected off the northwest bastion, which may have been a latrine, as a wastewater channel in *opus signinum* was built into it (Isac 1997a, 58). The dating, however, was based on the previous level containing ceramics dated to the second half of the second century (Isac 1997a, 58).

Phase IV of the *principia* was also deemed mid-third century as pieces of a discarded honorific inscription to Caracalla were found in the previous level (Isac 1997a, 61-62). The *principia* was rebuilt *a solo* out of stone in a careful manner. Though there is no direct dating evidence, Isac (1997a, 65) claims that repairs occurred in the second half of the third century. Apsidal room C is encompassed into a rectangular structure, along with the construction of a wastewater channel, while room D saw the installation of a hypocaust system that seemed to be repaired from many different pieces or very late in the sequence, and the installation of a *tribunalium*. All these features were dated by coins of Julia Domna and Severus Alexander in room E (Isac 1997a, 64). In the same phase the *praetorium* saw the installation of hypocaust systems in rooms 3 and 6 and the installation of a *praefurnium* (Isac 1997a, 66-67). There is no clear evidence the construction was mid-third century, and without clear stratigraphic excavation, it is difficult to discern how plausible Isac's (1997a) conclusions are.

Finally, at Gilău, repairs to the northern bastions of the *porta decumana* and the enlargement of the curtain wall from 1.2-1.86 m in thickness from funerary monuments and spoliated inscriptions was deemed to be a mid-third century feature (Isac et al. 1980, 37). The western portal of the *porta principalis dextra* was also blocked by a transverse wall containing spolia (Isac 1997a, 56). A hearth made out of tiles and stone was summarily constructed in the gateway (Isac 1997a, 56). Like the other evidence from Gilău, there is not much evidence to work off of to date any feature directly to the mid-third century. The possibility remains open that they may have dated to the late Severan period, and thus Isac's (1997a) overall conclusions should be taken with caution.

At Bologa, an annexe was constructed off of the *praetorium*, as well as a 17x6m dwelling that was erected by the *porta principalis dextra*, both of which extended over the *via sagularis*

(Gudea 1997a, 45). The stone phase of the fort was dated to the end of the second to beginning of the third century, which led Isac (2008, 143) to date this feature to the mid-third century. While this is entirely plausible, there is still not enough stratigraphic information to securely place them in a mid-third century context. In addition, the *porta praetoria* was blocked by a wall with external buttresses, after which two hearths were constructed out of stone in the area, implying that the gate was no longer in use (Gudea 1997a, 44). Likewise, the *porta decumana* was also blocked with a buttressed wall, and dirt brought into the gateway and tamped down until it reached the level of the *agger* (Gudea 1997a, 44).

The most precise dating for any later construction at Buciumi is a *terminus post quem* of 220 based on finds, however the latest occupation layers only contain mid-third century coinage (Gudea 1997b, 61). Thus, while the evidence for occupation during the mid-third century is secure, the evidence for construction must remain plausible, though not conclusive.

Construction included an annexe off of the *praetorium*, over the *via sagularis* and northwest of the *porta principalis dextra* (Gudea 1997b, 58). Building b4 was also constructed with a long 12.5x4m room, and the entire structure outfitted with a hypocaust system, potentially a small bath house inside the fort (Gudea 1997b, 59). While no dating material from the construction was found, an unidentified mid-third century antoninianus was found in room b of the building (Gudea 1997b, 59). The latest known construction at the site was a wall held together with earth bonding in rooms R and S of the *praetorium*, but it was unclear if this dated to the final phases of Roman occupation or perhaps later (Chirilă et al. 1972, 122-123).

At Romita, the depth of walls and gates on the eastern side of the fort were enlarged (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 46). While this feature was not dated, the excavators speculated that it was in anticipation of hostile attack, and thus dated it to the mid-third century (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 46). Furthermore, the *porta principalis sinistra* was blocked with monumental and architectural fragments and pieces of inscriptions (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 41). As the blockage was at the same level as the road, the excavators found it difficult to date, but also tied it into the mid-third century (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 41). While the *porta praetoria* was blocked at an undated period, it was deemed to be a normal part of a longer trajectory of repairs to the gateway (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 42). However, the gateway was eventually unblocked. A brooch with returned foot was dated by the excavators to the end of the third century, and led to the conclusion that the portal was unblocked sometime during the second half of the third century (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 56-57). These brooches have in the past been given a wide date range spanning the mid-second century to beyond the end of Roman occupation. Though Cociş (2004, type 37, 142-147) would date them to the mid-third

century, he admits that external dating shows a broad third century date range (Cociş 2004, 147; Peškař 1972, 115). Thus, dating this feature so precisely on the evidence of this brooch alone is problematic. Therefore, the mid-third century dating of these features at Romita, though enticing, must remain questionable.

Moigrad-*Porolissum* is unique in that it provides extensive evidence for construction in the mid-third century, due to the incorporation of inscriptions dating to the period in the fabric of the fort (Gudea 1982, 87; Hügel 2003, 135; Isac 2008, 142). While no stratigraphic or dating evidence is given, the repair of the southeast apsidal tower of the *porta decumana* was supposedly undertaken during the reign of Gordian III (Tóth 1978, 10; Gudea 1998, 79). However, later repairs to the wall must have taken place after the reign of Trajan Decius, as the material used for the repairs included five dedicatory inscriptions; four from the reign of Philip the Arab and one from the reign of Trajan Decius (Macrea 1957, 244; Tóth 1978, 10; Gudea 1989, 79; AE 1944, 52-56=ILD 668, 670-672).

Bastion 2 on the curtain wall was repaired with a buttress and an interior support wall after breaking in two due to the difficulties of the terrain (Gudea et al. 1983, 121). The repair was considered to have taken place securely after 260 based on the presence of a coin of Valerian for Cornelia Salonina dated 253-260, with the excavators stating that there was no way the coin could have been in the latest habitation levels if the repairs had not taken place so late (Gudea 1997c, 38, 40; Găzdac and Gudea 2006, 52 nr. 357). However, the relation to the coin and the repair is unclear, and the date range of this coin leaves the feature open to interpretation.¹²¹

General repairs on the curtain wall also took place sometime after 213, though whether or not they are mid-third century developments is not known (Gudea 1998, 40). Isac (2008, 140), however, sees these as later mid-third century developments despite the lack of dating criteria. The repairs included the addition of six buttresses constructed of fragmented funerary monuments, spoliated inscriptions and architectural fragments, which Gudea stated were erected in haste to combat the eroding terrain (Gudea et al. 1983, 121; Gudea 1997c, 39). Further repairs to the curtain wall near the *porta principalis sinistra* were dated to the mid-third century based on the incorporation of two votive altars, one of which mentions the *municipium septimium* (Chirilă et al. 1980, 89-90). Given that the town achieved the rank of

¹²¹ Isac (2008, 140) and Matei (2012, 71) takes this interpretation at face value, though Gudea (1997c, 38, 40) claims that the repair must have taken place after 260 based on the find, as the coin is only noted as having come from the tower.

municipium under Septimius Severus, there is clear possibility that this repair could have taken place before the mid-third century.

The blocking of the *porta principalis sinistra* is dated to the mid-third century based on the incorporation of a dedicatory inscription to the son of Maximinus Thrax in its fabric (Tóth 1978, 26-27; AE 1958, 22=AE 1979, 494=ILD 666). While the blocking of the *porta principalis dextra* was also found to be blocked long enough to go through two phases of repairs, which consisted of spoliated inscriptions and funerary monuments (Moga 1950, 132). Though not dated, this was also interpreted as being in anticipation of an enemy attack (Moga 1950, 132).

In the interior of the fort, phase 7 of building C8, the final construction phase of the building, room 0 was reorganized into four smaller rooms, one of which was repurposed for corn drying. The front of the building included a wall for a portico, in the plaster of which was found a coin of Trajan Decius, leading to the conclusion that this phase must have taken place after 250 (Gudea 1998, 41). Finally, while no notable mid-third century construction was found at the nearby 'customs house', the presence of coins of Gordian III in the building suggests that it was still in use (Gudea 1996, 50, 69).

The concentration of epigraphic material reused in the construction and repair of the fort's defences gives an important series of *termini post quem* for activity at the site. The only areas where dating is questionable are early repairs to the southeast apsidal tower in the *porta decumana*, the buttressed repair of the curtain wall, and the *porta principalis sinistra*. As the stone fort was supposedly erected in 213, these developments could date to the mid-third century (Gudea 1998, 40). However, the dating of the blockage of the *porta principalis sinistra* is suspect if it was in place long enough to endure multiple phases of repair. Nonetheless, the site is a key indicator for robust mid-third century military activity in the region.

At Cășeiu, the best evidence for mid-third century activity comes from phase IIIc of the *praetorium*. A new wing was constructed over the *via sagularis* to the south and east of the *praetorium* (Isac 2003, 143). Room 17 of the structure was enlarged with an apse and hypocaust system, with brick and stone support walls of poor-quality construction erected to support the apse (Isac 2003, 143-144). An oven was constructed, and the nearby find of iron slag led to an interpretation of possible economic activities. Furthermore, a water basin with a wastewater channel was built into room 20, further suggesting economic activities, with Isac

(2003, 145) identifying the new wing as a *fabrica*. After *horreum* I was destroyed in the early third century, and converted into living space, a new *horreum* was constructed in the *praetorium* to offset its demolition (Isac 2003, 148, 160-162).

Though two coins of Philip the Arab were found in the occupation levels of the latest phases of the reconfigured *praetorium*, Isac (2003, 134-145, 148) ultimately dated the phasing to the mid-third century based on parallels for structures overlaying the *via sagularis* at Gilău and Buciumi.

Also at Cășeiu, the northern gateway of the *porta principalis dextra* was blocked by a wall set in mortar of low quality (Isac 2003, 103). Isac (2003, 103-104) stated that there were multiple levels of inhabitancy without giving an exact number. None of them are given in detail save for a white mortar floor surface some 10cm thick.

More ephemeral evidence was seen in the fort, but it is unclear if this relates to the final stages of Roman occupation or the immediate post-Roman period. Most notable were the imprints of wall foundations in trench SP III. These consisted of a layer of impacted tiles over wall buttresses. The imprint of a clay-bonded dwelling in the *porta principalis dextra* which sat on top of a clay layer containing a coin of Philip the Arab was noted as well (Isac 2003, 73, 93). A clay layer with part of a carbonized timber frame wall suggested that a veranda or other shelter was added to the northwest corner of the interior curtain wall at a late period (Isac 2003, 107-108). However, Isac (2003, 107-108) admitted that the material associated with the structure was very poor and difficult to date (Isac 2003, 107-108).

At Gherla, repairs to the curtain wall were not dated with finds or stratigraphy, but were considered to be mid-third century, as they contained funerary monuments and inscriptions (Protase et al. 2008, 35). This dating was based not on stylistic features, but rather on the fact that the repairs contained spoliated material, though there is no datable material from the inscriptions to give a *terminus post quem* for their incorporation. Thus, this claim is problematic.

Blocking of the gateway of the *porta praetoria* was found to have occurred at Ilișua with a rudimentary wall build of random pieces of architectural fragments held together with clay (Protase et al. 1997, 48). While the excavators admitted the feature was difficult to date with accuracy, it overlaid a layer containing a coin of Geta (Protase et al. 1997, 48). Thus, the dating of the blockage could date from anytime from the early third century onwards and need not be a mid-third century feature.

The *porta decumana* at Brâncovenești was repaired sometime with bricks and some 52 fragments from funerary monuments taken from the cemetery, and the width of the opening reduced from 4m to 2m in size (Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 71). While the feature is generally undated, Protase and Zrínyi (2011, 71) suggested it may have been constructed in anticipation of a barbarian attack. The western curtain wall was also reinforced with six buttresses, none of which could be dated (Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 70). Isac (2008, 139), however, appears to have assumed a date in the second half of the third century as he included it in his study. Like previous examples, there is no clear path linking the narrowing of the *porta decumana* gateway at Brâncovenești to a barbarian attack, due to the lack of datable features and no evidence of an attack whatsoever.

At Inlăceni, the *porta decumana* was blocked sometime after its initial construction with a wall slightly towards the exits of the bastions, in the direction of the curtain wall (Gudea 1979, 163).¹²² While the *porta principalis dextra* was also blocked with a wall across the interior, it was uncertain to the excavators whether the *porta praetoria* had evidence of either a threshold or blocking (Gudea 1979, 162-164). Gudea (1979, 179) suggested that due to the usage of fragments from funerary monuments, the walls were constructed in haste, and therefore must be mid-third century. While the final coin, a bronze issue of Philip the Arab was found in the northern bastion of the *porta praetoria*, there is no direct link to the blockage of the gateways (Gudea 1979, 198).

There is not much evidence at Brețcu for mid-third century construction, however a lone wall at the northern end of the fort was considered to represent a construction over the *via sagularis* (Gudea 1980, 298-299).¹²³ Furthermore, Gudea (1980, 299) noted that there was evidence in earlier excavations of either thresholds or blocking of at least three of the four fort gates but does not elaborate on dating or interpretation. Isac (2008, 114), considered this potential evidence of mid-third century gate blocking. The evidence of blocking in the case of Brețcu is extremely problematic. The presence of thresholds would be necessary for the existence of a gate in the first instance. Therefore, the interpretation of both Gudea (1980, 299) and Isac (2008, 114) is questionable in this instance.

At Râșnov, building C was erected over the *via sagularis* near the *porta principalis dextra*. It was interpreted as being a potential barrack block (Gudea and Pop 1971, 13). The incorporation of part of an inscription to Julia Mamaea dated 222-235, led to the conclusion

¹²² Interestingly, Isac (2008) does not include this in his study.

¹²³ Though not noted by Isac (2008), this feature would fit into the paradigm.

that the structure must have been built after 235 (Macrea 1944, 235). While repairs were made on the building before its abandonment, they are not necessarily much later in date (Gudea and Pop 1971, 37, 44).

Additionally, three of the four gateways of the fort were blocked off, though undated (Gudea and Pop 1971, 65). Admitting that the blockages could have taken place any time from the mid-second century onwards when the stone fort was constructed, the excavators claimed that barbarian attacks from the lowlands south of the Carpathians in the mid-third century would inspire the blockages (Gudea and Pop 1971, 65). Thus, Râșnov provides another example where barbarian attacks are given as an explanation for features without clear dating evidence or wider implications of raiding or invasion.

7.3.2 Conclusions

Three phenomena are apparent in the evidence for mid-third century construction – the erection of new buildings and annexes over the *via sagularis*, the repair of curtain walls, and the blocking of fort gates. While it has been noted that in most cases there is no evidence to precisely date any of these developments, they have largely been seen in the context of the second half of the mid-third century (Hügel 2003, 142; Isac 2008, 145-146; Matei 2012, 74-76).¹²⁴

The most common manifestation of construction over the *via sagularis* is the appearance of annexes off of the *praetorium*, as seen at Bologa (Gudea 1997a, 45), Buciumi (Gudea 1997b, 59), and Cășeiu (Isac 2003, 143), while the construction of a potential latrine at Gilău (Isac 1997a, 58), a large dwelling at Bologa by the *porta principalis dextra* (Gudea 1997b, 59), a possible construction off of the northern end of the curtain wall at Brețcu (Gudea 1980, 298-299), and the construction of a potential barrack block near the *porta principalis dextra* (Gudea and Pop 1981, 13, 37, 44).¹²⁵ These constructions have been interpreted as evidence of a quick solution to the growing commodity of space within the fort spaces in the second half of the mid-third century (Hügel 2003, 146; Isac 2008, 145).¹²⁶ While coin finds in the habitation levels of the structures at Gilău and Cășeiu denote period activity, the dating of

¹²⁴ *Contra* Benea and Hica (2004, 100-105) which argues that these developments are in fact evidence of the local population, perhaps even Late Antique *limitanei*, following the Christianization of the Empire in a process of ‘desacralizare’ of pagan monuments, thus incorporating them into the building fabric of former Roman forts.

¹²⁵ Matei (2012, 59-60) adds an unpublished construction at Tihău noted by Opreanu (1998b, 81), and geophysical evidence from Romita noted by Franzen et al. (2007, 171) and Marcu (2009, 109). An unpublished construction at Vețel has also been noted (Hügel 2003, 143; Petculescu et al. 1982, 73-76).

¹²⁶ However, by Hügel’s (2003, 145) own admission, the construction of three buildings along the *via sagularis* at Moigrad-*Porolissum* must have taken place before 222 based on the incorporation of brick stamps of the *Legiones VII Gemina Felix* and the *III Gallica* (Gudea 1997c, 41-42).

these structures in the stratigraphic sequence is still unclear, except that it is 'late', save for the evidence of spoliation of an inscription at Râșnov (Macrea 1944, 235).

Parallels outside the survey area but within *Dacia* were seen at Jupa, Răcari, and Jidova (Isac 2008; Matei 2012, 59). However, further afield, there are few analogies. These are the 'Wallbau' in the fort at Kapersburg in Southwest Germany with only a 'late dating' and the construction of two buildings in the fort at *Vindolanda*; a structure erected by the northeast gate in the third century and demolished around 270 and a storage building erected sometime in the third century by the western gate. (Scholz 2006, 79; Welsby 1982, 26, 30; Birley and Blake 2007, 40-45; Matei 2012, 62-63; 2018, 81-83). While these parallels may work for the freestanding buildings over the *via sagularis*, there are still no real parallels for the extension of *praetoria* over the road. Whether or not this should also imply that the *via sagularis* had gone out of use or perhaps lost its importance as a road circumnavigating the forts' interior is still an open question in the absence of accurate dating and phasing. However, it is noteworthy that there is evidence of blocking of fort gates at all sites with construction over the *via sagularis* save for Buciumi and Brețcu.

Repair of the curtain wall and bastions was another significant feature of mid-third century construction. Moigrad-*Porolissum* provides the best dated evidence from the repairs done to the southeast apsidal tower of the *porta decumana* that included the spoliation of four different inscriptions, the latest of which dated to the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251) (Macrea 1957, 244; Tóth 1978, 10; Gudea 1989, 79). Other repairs to the curtain walls and bastions do not have a secure *terminus post quem* in the mid-third century, as the stone fort was not erected until after 213 (Gudea 1998, 40). One of the key factors seen as mid-third century activity in all cases was the use of spoliated funerary monuments, inscriptions and architectural fragments in repairs to curtain walls, bastions and fort gates. This practice was noted at Turda-*Potaissa*, Gilău, Gherla, and Brâncovenești, though none of these elements were securely dated to the mid-third century or later (Bărbulescu 1987, 29, Isac et al. 1980, 37; Protase et al. 2008, 35; Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 71).¹²⁷ While these were considered in some cases to be in anticipation of a barbarian attack, the presence of buttressing in curtain wall repairs at Moigrad-*Porolissum* (Gudea et al. 1983, 121; Gudea 1997c, 39) and Brâncovenești (Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 70) suggest that the repairs were more to do with structural upkeep of walls due to subsidence and/or regular maintenance. Indeed, Isac (2008,

¹²⁷ Although no spoliation was noted in the repairs of the curtain walls at Romita, these were also given a mid-third century date (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 46).

145-146) concluded that these features were evidence of the continuation of daily life and routine within the forts, as the repair of forts in such a fashion was not uncommon in the Roman world, especially during the second and third centuries. Matei (2012, 75-76), however, suggests that these developments should be seen as the ‘abnormal’ becoming ‘normal’ in ‘abnormal times’. Ultimately, without secure dating, it is difficult to place much of this activity in any context other than ‘late’, and it should not necessarily be seen as anything more than maintenance on structure of the curtain walls. As Isac (2008, 146) states, the usage of spoliated material is a normal feature of repair and upkeep of military sites, with ample evidence from the Roman period south of the Danube.

The last feature to be addressed is the blocking of fort gates. This is the only phenomenon which is in multiple examples in Roman *Dacia*, Southwest Germany, and Hadrian’s Wall. Like Southwest Germany, there appears to be no single factor that facilitated the blocking of fort gates. In most cases, broad dating context can be given for these features. Indeed, while the blocking of gates is broadly dated to a third century and/or ‘late’ context at Gilău, Bologa, Cășeiu, Ilișua, and Inlăceni, only the blocking of the *porta principalis sinistra* at Moigrad-*Porolissum* can be given a *terminus post quem* of 238 based on the incorporation of an inscription of Maximinus Thrax within its fabric (Tóth 1978, 26-27). Further, while the evidence from Brețcu may equate to nothing more than the presence of thresholds (Gudea 1980, 295), the excavators were unable to offer a more precise date for Turda-*Potaissa*, Romita, Brețcu, or Râșnov.

Important to note as well are the differences in the makeup of the fabric of the blockages. The use of *spolia* from funerary monuments, architectural elements, and inscriptions at Romita (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 41), Moigrad-*Porolissum* (Tóth 1978, 26-27; Moga 1950, 132), Ilișua (Protase et al. 1997, 48) and Inlăceni (Gudea 1979, 179), initially led to conclusions that these were constructed in haste, in anticipation of a barbarian attack from the Carpathians to the east. This justification was also given for the blockages at Turda (Bărbulescu 1987, 29-30, 111-112) and Râșnov (Gudea and Pop 1971, 65). While the blockage at Turda appeared to have been removed, only one gate remained unblocked at Râșnov. At least in the case of Râșnov, this may be argued to be defensive, especially given its location near the southern arc of the Carpathians. However, if fear of widespread barbarian attack were the case, similar evidence might be expected from a larger number of sites along the frontier.

The usage of buttressing in the blocking of the *porta praetoria* and *porta decumana* and the filling of the gateway of the *porta decumana* at Bologa (Gudea 1997a, 56) suggests that these

features were more for support than for defence. Likewise, the low quality mortar blocking of the *porta decumana* at Cășeiu (Isac 2003, 103-104), and the blocking of the *porta principalis dextra* at Gilău (Isac 1997a, 56) and the *porta praetoria* at Ilișua (Protase et al. 1997, 48) with spoliated fragments in clay bonding also imply a non-defensive purpose. This seems even more the case as the blocked gateways at Gilău and Bologa, and Cășeiu displayed evidence for habitation in the newly created areas, further suggesting that the blockages were for practical purposes and strengthening the case for a change in the usage of internal space inside the forts. Due to the method of excavation and recording, whether or not this was a long process that took place over decades or a series of short events, or even in some cases took place after the end of Roman control of the region is not possible to determine.

7.4 Demolition at military sites

There is very little evidence for demolition at military sites in Transylvania during the mid-third century, what exists is limited to the extramural settlement at Vețel-*Micia* and the fort at Cășeiu (*fig. 7.3*). At Vețel, the pit containing a sealed context with coarse ware ceramics and a coin of Philip the Arab was backfilled before the construction of an overlying wall (Gamureac 2014, 237-238). At Cășeiu, a rubbish pit in the courtyard of the *praetorium* was backfilled with building material including wall plaster, and the entire courtyard was then levelled over and paved with pebbles immediately before the beginning of construction phase IIIc (Isac 2003, 146). It is entirely possible, and in fact likely, that there was indeed more evidence of demolition, especially with the potential amount of construction during the mid-third century. However, due to recording and excavation techniques, these features are lost in the archaeological record.

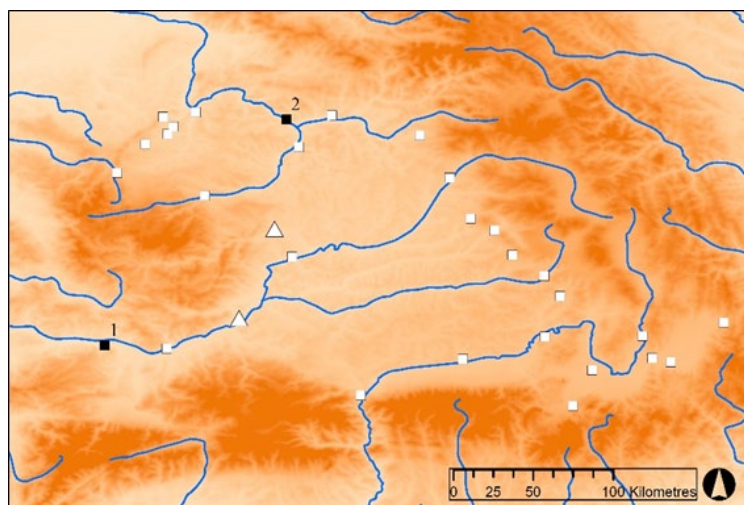


Figure 7. 3: Demolition at military sites in Transylvania.

1. Vețel-*Micia* 2. Cășeiu

7.5 Destruction at military sites

There is not much evidence for destruction at military sites in Transylvania, with only four sites exhibiting any stratigraphic burning layers in their final phases of Roman occupation (fig. 7.4). Gilău, Buciumi, and Brâncovenеști showed evidence of partial burning, while the only site that was found to have a burning layer across the entire site was Ilișua.

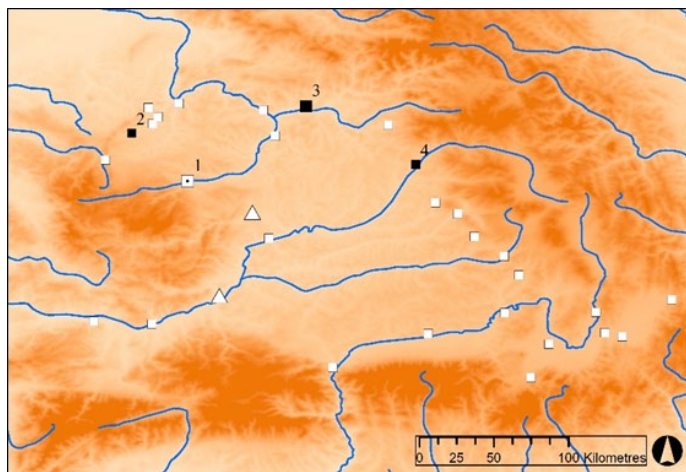


Figure 7. 4: Destruction at military sites in Transylvania. Key: Large black square: burning layer across entire site; Small black square: burning layer across partial site; Large white square with dot: burning layer across partial site with human skeletal remains.

1. Gilău 2. Buciumi 3. Ilișua 4. Brâncovenеști

7.5.1 Evidence for destruction at military sites

The only site that also had any evidence of human remains within a possible mid-third century context was Gilău, although this was not associated with the burning layers at the site. A mutilated human skeleton without limbs was found buried in haste in the supposed latrine construction attached to the northwest bastion of the curtain wall (Isac 1997a, 58). While Isac (1997a, 56) admitted that the skeleton could have been buried at any period during the Roman occupation, the fact remains that its deposition is associated with a structure that was supposedly built in the mid-third century.

Evidence for destruction at the site was limited to the gateway of the *porta decumana*, which suffered from a fire sometime in the second half of the third century (Isac 1997a, 54). The dating was based upon the presence of a number of finds, including a hemispheric bronze vessel with scenes of a *pankration*, and part of a parade helmet with images of Mars on it (Opreanu and Diaconescu 1987, 157; Isac 2000). In general, artefacts such as bronze vessels and parade helmets can usually be dated no more accurately than the span of a century or more. Thus, they cannot provide accurate dating criteria on their own. While the fire in a late phase of occupation is clear from the excavation report, it is not possible to rely on such finds for precise dating.

At Buciumi, burning layers were noted in the final layers of both gateways of the *porta principalis sinistra*, with traces of iron found in the burning layer (Chirilă et al. 1972, 17). Burning layers were also noted in the barracks, with the excavators stating that the fort went up in flames at the time of departure of the troops garrisoned there, due to burning layers immediately underneath large deposits of tile fragments (Gudea 1997b, 61). While these layers were not precisely dated, the fire likely occurred sometime in the later mid-third century based on finds, which Gudea (1997b, 71) listed as consisting of an antoninianus of Trebonianus Gallus, 'late' Samian Ware vessels, and a proto-crossbow brooch.

Ilișua is the only site with a burning layer found across the entire site. Admitting the cause of the fire was not known, the excavators noted that it appeared to consume the fort at the end of Roman occupation (Protase et al. 1997, 56). However, the presence of huts in the immediate post-Roman levels were also destroyed by fire (Protase et al. 1997, 56). Whether or not these were two separate fires or a singular event is not entirely clear in the report.

Both the fort and extramural settlement at Brâncovenești apparently ended in a fire (Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 73). While there is not much discussion of the fire in the extramural settlement, the best evidence in the fort for the fire was in the *retentura* (Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 73). However, the excavators were unable to discern if the fire dated to the Marcomannic Wars of the mid-second century or were in fact from the mid-third century (Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 73). Therefore, the lack of confidence in dating these destruction levels would leave them suspect as dating from the survey period.

7.5.2 Conclusions

The overall lack of destruction visible at military sites in Transylvania is striking in comparison to the evidence from Southwest Germany. Limited to just four sites, it would appear that in general there is not much evidence for violent destruction, especially if the uncertainty of the dating of the destruction layers at Brâncovenești is taken into account. Furthermore, burning layers are not necessarily indicative of enemy destruction, and may be indicative of clearing a site prior to abandonment, rendering it unusable to opposing forces, or purely accidental. While there have been numerous suggestions that the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab reached the Transylvanian heartland (Piso 1974; Petolescu 1995, 120; Găzdac 2012, 175), it is important to remember that there is no archaeological evidence of incursions into the region, in contrast to the evidence from the sub-Carpathian region of Roman *Dacia* (Diaconescu 2004, 129-130).

7.6 Hoarding at military sites

There are only two mid-third century hoards from military sites in Transylvania, both of which there is little to no contextual data recorded (*fig 7.5*). The first hoard was found in a garden of the modern town of Gilău, presumably nearby the fort in 1880 (Suciu 2000, nr. 61). The hoard has been lost to time, but contained some 1170 denarii, 1147 of which were identified, dating from 168 during the reign of Marcus Aurelius to 244-248 with Gordian III. The majority of the coins, 855 were Severan in date, with 360 coming from the reign of Severus Alexander alone. There were also a supposed 220 coins of Gordian III (Suciu 2000, nr. 61).

The second hoard, from Boița is also lost, but was supposedly found in the fort there. There is no detailed list of its composition, though it is believed to have contained 214 coins ranging in date from Commodus to Gordian III (Suciu 2000, nr. 9). No other information is known about the find.

Thus, while the find from Boița was at least found within the fort, it is not known if the find from Gilău came from within the fort, the extramural settlement, or from somewhere further afield. It is interesting that both hoards end in Gordian III, though some caution is necessary, as not all of the Gilău coins were identified and the composition of the Boița hoard is unknown. Unfortunately, no further information can be gleaned from these finds.

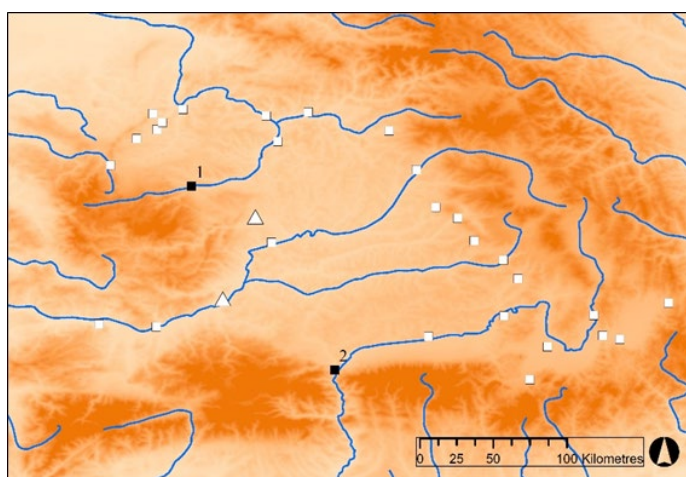


Figure 7. 5: Hoarding at military sites in Transylvania. Key: Black triangle: fortresses with monetary hoards; Black square: forts with monetary hoards

1. Gilău 2. Boița

7.8 Military sites conclusions

In general, the evidence for mid-third century activity at military sites in Transylvania is sporadic at best (*tab 7.1*). Construction is the clearest indicator of activity, but this was still noted at just fifteen of 31 total sites. Meanwhile, the evidence for demolition, destruction, and hoarding did not yield enough information to make any meaningful conclusions other than a

lack of any sort of widespread violence, raiding, or destruction. This was especially, but not specifically limited to the period of the Carpic War of Philip the Arab. Instead, what is visible is a continuation of the maintenance and upkeep of military installations.

Outside of the use of datable spoliated inscriptions in the case of Moigrad-*Porolissum*, dating many of the features at military sites is not possible beyond a general third century range. However, the observations by Hügél (2003, 142-145) and Isac (2008, 145-146) that the repair construction of fortifications should be seen as evidence of the continuation of normal routine of upkeep at military sites is important. Furthermore, the repurposing of areas inside the interior of forts, points more to a pragmatic use of available space rather than any signs of distress or disruption. Given the basic dating evidence and the repairs at Moigrad-*Porolissum*, it would appear that these processes were maintained well into the 250s.

Whether this process occurred over a sustained period of time, perhaps even post-dating the Roman abandonment of the region, or if it generally took place around the same period is not possible to discern due to the method of excavation and recording and the level of publication. Matei's (2012, 75) argument, however, that construction over the *via sagularis* and the repurposing of space inside blocked gateways is a sign of the 'abnormal becoming normal' is problematic. It works on the assumption that there is clear definition of what 'normal' should be. In the most ideal of circumstances this is difficult to interpret, let alone in a region with poorly defined chronological parameters in the archaeological record. Thus, while it is not possible to say precisely when these sites ended, archaeologically, there are no clear signs of disruption.

Site Name	Construction/Repair	Demolition	Destruction	Hoarding
Fortresses				
Alba Iulia-Apulum				
Turda-Potaissa				
Forts				
Vetel-Micia				
Cigmau				
Razboieni				
Gilau				
Bologa				
Buciumi				
Romanasi				
Romita				
Moigrad-Porolissum				
Tihau				
Caseiu				
Gherla				
Ilisua				
Orheiu Bistritei				
Brancovenesti				
Calugareni				
Sarateni				
Inlaceni				
Odorheiul Secuiesc				
Sanpaul				
Bretcu				
Olteni				
Borosneu Mare				
Comolau				
Feldioara				
Rasnov				
Hoghiz				
Cincsor				

Table 7. 1: Mid-third century activity at military sites in Transylvania

8. Civilian Sites in Transylvania

8.1 Introduction

The examination of the military sites in the region in the previous chapter demonstrated that from the available evidence there appeared to be little archaeological evidence for disruption, with the continuation routine practices possible extending from ca. 250 onwards to the end of Roman control over the region, and potentially beyond. Therefore, it is important to now investigate the archaeological evidence from civilian contexts, both towns and rural settlements. There is a total of 23 civilian sites in the survey, which are split between nine towns and fourteen rural sites. As with military sites, the body of published research on civil sites in Transylvania is markedly less strong than that for Southwest Germany. This is most apparent with rural settlements, where even on sites that are deemed to have been occupied in the mid-third century there is little evidence to speak of. Analyses of the latest Roman phases of civil sites commonly focus on stray finds of a ‘late’ date known from each settlement, and there are few detailed analyses based on systematic excavation (Diaconescu 2004, 130-131). Complicating the issue is that many of these stray finds are antiquarian discoveries, and their findspots are either omitted or left very vague. Furthermore, the discussion of civil sites in the mid-third century is largely missing from the overall narrative, with no real discussion given to the archaeology outside of a small number of studies (Horedt 1982, 59-86; Diaconescu 2004, 128-134; Hügel 2003, 148-151; Wanner and De Sena 2010).

The situation has improved in recent years due to the publication of rescue excavations, primarily at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and Cluj-Napoca, but the lack of synthesized data and the disparate nature of the publication of excavations means that many of the nuances visible in the archaeological sequences in Southwest Germany are virtually non-existent in Transylvania.

As stated in section 7.1, the modern town of Alba Iulia is home to three different Roman settlements all named *Apulum*; the legionary fortress in the centre of the modern town, the *municipium Septimium* which evolved from the extramural settlement of the legionary fortress, and the *colonia Aurelia* just south of the modern town in the suburb of Partoș. As such, the *municipium* and legionary fortress are referred to as Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, and the *colonia* is referred to as Partoș-*Apulum* for the sake of clarity in this thesis. Furthermore, while *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizetegusa* was home to the *concilium trium Daciarum*, the governing body of the province and technically the provincial capital of the *Tres Daciae*, *Apulum* was the seat of the provincial governor.

Towns are first be examined followed by rural sites, after which general conclusions will be made. Unfortunately, neither towns nor rural sites have been examined extensively, and this has resulted in the poor quality of data outside of a very small number of sites. However, there is still enough evidence at least in the case of towns to make some inferences into mid-third century activity in the region. Similar to military sites, there is little evidence for disruption. Though the dating of the latest phases is unclear, it appears that some semblance of town life continued on into the latest phases of occupation. This is most visible in the construction and repair of *domus*-type structures in the latest phases of Roman occupation at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, *Alba Iulia-Apulum*, *Partoș-Apulum*, and *Cluj-Napoca*.

8.2 Towns in the mid-third century

There is a total of nine towns that displayed enough archaeological evidence to be included in the survey of the region. These include the *coloniae* at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, *Partoș-Apulum*, *Turda-Potaissa*, and *Cluj-Napoca*, the *municipia* at *Zlatna*, *Alba Iulia-Apulum* and *Moigrad-Porolissum*, and the small towns at *Micășasa* and *Cristești* (*fig 8.1*). To date, there has only been one extensive study on the evolution of towns in Transylvania. This was undertaken by Diaconescu (2004). While this study is extensive and thorough, it is limited to the evidence from *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, *Partoș-Apulum* and *Alba Iulia-Apulum*, and *Cluj-Napoca*.¹²⁸ Concerning specific studies on the end of Roman towns in the region, Hügél (2003, 148-150) only devotes three pages to the topic of ‘late’ phases of occupation in towns, while Wanner and De Sena (2010) supplies a comparison of the post-Roman phases of *Moigrad-Porolissum*, *Cluj-Napoca*, and *Turda-Potaissa*. While the constraints of ceramic dating at military sites is also present in towns in the region, modern excavation has allowed for more nuanced interpretation of the later Roman stratigraphy, especially at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* and *Cluj-Napoca*.

¹²⁸ An earlier basic overview of the aspects of Roman towns in Dacia in general was produced by Branga (1980), however, it does not deal with development or chronology, especially with respect to the end of the Roman period.

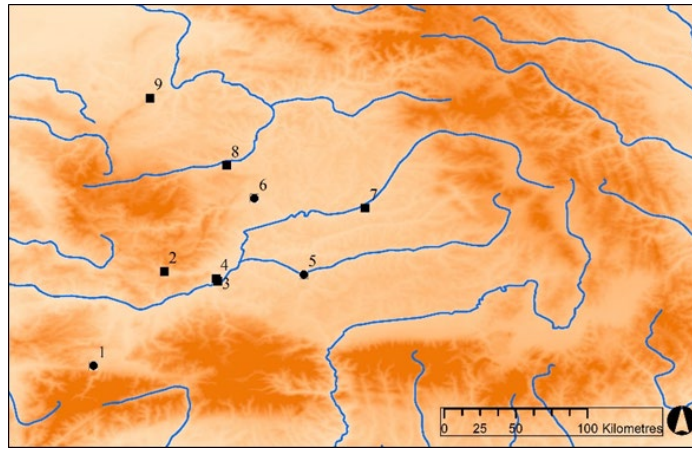


Figure 8. 1: Datable material from towns in Transylvania. Key: Square square: Towns with datable ceramic material; Circle: Towns with datable numismatic material

1. Sarmizegetusa 2. Zlatna 3. Partoș, 4. Alba Iulia 5. Micăsasa 6. Turda 7. Cristești 8. Cluj-Napoca 9. Moigrad-*Porolissum*

8.2.1 Towns with ceramic dating evidence

Five towns in the survey area had published evidence for ceramic dating in the mid-third century. These are Partoș-*Apulum*, Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, Cristești, Cluj-Napoca, and Moigrad-*Porolissum*.¹²⁹

One sherd of Julius II/Julianus I Rheinzabern Ware, as well as Trier Ware found in the antiquarian excavations of the *colonia* at Partoș-*Apulum* led to a mid-third century dating for the latest pieces in the ceramic assemblage from the town (Isac et. al 1979, 232). The latest coin from the site is an Antoninianus of Gallienus dated 260-268 (Găzdac et al. 2009, 79 nr. 383). As discussed in section 7.2.1, there is difficulty in securely ascribing many of the inscriptions in the general area of Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and Partoș-*Apulum* to a specific site. This is due to the antiquarian nature of the finds and the proximity of the *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis* at Partoș, and the *Municipium Septimium Apulense* and legionary fortress of the *XIII Gemina* to one another at Alba Iulia. An inscription dated to 250 during the reign of Trajan Decius mentioning a *Colonia Nova Apulensis* was first considered to refer to the evolution in rank of *Municipium Septimium Apulense* at Alba Iulia to a *colonia* (Aldea and Popa 1972, 210-211). Recent scholarship, however, has sided with the interpretation that the inscription in fact refers to the town at Partoș, as it is dedicated to Decius as *restitutori Daciae*, with the explanation being that the province as a whole was considered ‘*restituta*’ at least in name after barbarian engagements on the Lower Danube (Diaconescu and Piso 1993, 67; Ota 2012, 155). However, the latest inscription associated with the *colonia* dates from 252 during the reign of Trebonianus Gallus and christens the town *Colonia Aurelia*

¹²⁹ A general ceramic date of the period of Roman occupation was given to the assemblage from Zlatna as well, but due to the vagueness of the dating, it was not included in the study (Lipovan 1992-1994a; b; 1994).

Apulensis Chrysopolis, or the ‘city of gold’ (AE 1989, 628=IDR III/5, 432). Thus, while the ceramic evidence is sparse, numismatic and epigraphic evidence gives clear dating for mid-third century activity at Partoş-*Apulum*.

Pottery vessels found during excavation of a dwelling at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* were found to span a date range from the mid-second into the mid-third century based on the presence of Samian, *terra nigra*, and Wetterauer Ware from Southwest Germany (Ciobanu et al. 2000, 296).¹³⁰ However, there is no discussion of either the Samian or *terra nigra* evidence. The latest single coin find for the town are six coins of Claudius II dated 268-270 (Găzdac et al. 2009, 108 nr. 305-310). The latest coin find overall belongs to a silver coin hoard with a closing date under Aurelian, which was discovered during excavation of the baths in the governor’s palace (Cserni 1908, 44-45; Găzdac et al. 2009, 47-57). Despite the ambiguity in findspots of inscriptions, the latest inscription from the town was a votive inscription dedicated to the deity *Epona Augusta* dated 251-253 during the reign of Trebonianus Gallus and Volusian in excavations of the governor’s palace (AE 1954, 258=AE 1983 815=IDR III/5, 18).

Though the only two Rheinzabern sherds known from Cristeşti are dated to the Antonine period, the presence of regionally produced stamped wares suggests mid-third century activity (Man 2011, 68, 97). Coin finds from the town are known to extend into the reign of Aurelian, but the coin list has not been completely worked through and remains unpublished (Man 2011, 55). Unfortunately, there is no discussion of the chronology of the stamped wares, and so the coin dating is the only secure piece of evidence.

The ceramic evidence for fine wares at Cluj-Napoca is very sparse into the third century, with only one sherd of Rheinzabern known from the entire town (Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007, 155, 375). There is no published evidence of regionally produced stamped wares at all (Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007, 375). Furthermore, there is a complete lack of coarse wares convincingly datable to after the first half of the third century from the site (Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007, 432). Period coin finds in the town extend into the reign of Aurelian, with three known antoniniani dating to 270-275 (Petac 2011, 278 nr. 275). The two latest inscriptions from the town are dedicatory inscriptions from the reign of Philip the Arab, dated 244-249 and 244-247 (AE 1944, 39-40).

At the town at Moigrad-*Porolissum*, 20 sherds dated 241-244 and seven dated 250-275 were found in the overall assemblage of 1035 sherds of regionally produced stamped wares,

¹³⁰ Production of Wetterauer Ware, however, is dated to no later than the mid-second century (Rupp 1987, 55-56).

totalling 2.6% of the assemblage (Filip 2008, 71-72). The precise dating of the ceramic evidence is suspect, that there is no discussion of the justification for the conclusions given. It is also unclear how much comes from the fort or the town, as the assemblage is stated as coming from 'complexul arheologic Porolissum' (Filip 2008, 71-72).¹³¹ Moreover, the ceramics from the 1998 excavations in the town are still unpublished. Further ceramic evidence came from excavations of building LM 1, room B, during which a Trier motto beaker was found in a level that was dated 250-270, assumingly based on the motto beaker, though this is not explicitly stated (Gudea 1993, 227-228; Tamba 2008, 70-71). The latest dated coin found in the town is an antoninianus of Valerian dated to 254 (Găzdac and Gudea 2006, 75 nr. 28). The latest inscription to have been found in the town itself is a votive inscription in commemoration of the construction of a temple to *Jupiter Dolichenus* by the *triumviri* of the *municipium* dated 238-244 during the reign of Gordian III (AE 2001, 1701=AE 2006, 1125-ILD 683). However, three inscriptions were set up under Philip the Arab which record the *Municipium Septimum Porolissense*. These examples were found embedded in the fabric of the southeast apsidal tower of the *porta decumana* of the fort (section 7.2.1; AE 1944, 52-54=ILD 670-672).¹³² The evidence from Moigrad-*Porolissum* thus indicated that civic life was actively maintained in the town at least until the early 250s, but also suggest the defences of the neighbouring fort were being maintained thereafter.

The ceramic dating for towns suffers from the same issues of military sites, namely that convincingly dated typologies of regional coarse wares do not exist. This means that except in the cases of Partoş-*Apulum* and Moigrad-*Porolissum* where the presence, albeit miniscule, of mid-third century imported wares has been identified, it is impossible to use pottery to demonstrate activity through to the 250s let alone beyond. Without in-depth discussion of the imported wares in the pertinent literature, the evidence from Alba Iulia-*Apulum* can only be taken at face value, while attempts to confirm dating at Cristeşti and Cluj-Napoca are largely based on regionally and locally produced wares which do not have secure dating sequences. However, the presence of numismatic and/or epigraphic material at all five sites would seem to confirm mid-third century activity.

8.2.2 Towns with numismatic and epigraphic dating evidence

The remaining four towns, the *coloniae* at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* and *Turda-Potaissa*, and the small towns at *Zlatna* and *Micăsasa* do not have enough published ceramic material to

¹³¹ See section 7.2.1 for the relation of this problem to the fort.

¹³² Two are dated 244-247 while the third is dated 245.

allow an assessment of whether they were occupied in the mid-third century and beyond. Micăsasa also lacks epigraphic evidence.

The latest coin known from *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* is an issue of Gallienus dated 253-268, but it was recovered from an unknown findspot (Găzdac and Cociş 2004, 79 nr. 98). By contrast, the latest provenanced coin is an antoninianus of Valerian dated 256-257 (Găzdac and Cociş 2004, 140), while the latest inscription known from the town is a dedicatory inscription dated to 255 during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus ((CIL III 7971=ILD 554=IDR III/2, 82).

At Zlatna, the latest period coin is a sestertius of Philip the Arab dated 244-249 (Petac 2011, 336, nr. 646). This immediately post-dates the latest epigraphic testimony to civic life; a votive inscription dated to 238-244 under Gordian III (AE 1971, 381=AE 2006, 1124=IDR III/3, 297).

The range here is broadly consistent with a single 'late' find at the small town and pottery production centre at Micăsasa, where a *Provincia Dacia* issue of Philip the Arab dated 246-247 (Petac 2011, 304 nr. 434) was recovered.

Material from the *colonia* at Turda-*Potaissa* runs a few decades later; an antoninianus of Aurelian dated 270-275 was the latest coin find associated with the town (Pîslaru 2012, 230 nr. 871.). The town also yielded the latest dated inscription known from the region; a plaque commemorating the completion of construction of a temple to *Deo Azizo Bono Puero Conservatori* during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus dated 256-258 (CIL III 875=ILS 4345).

In sum, all the sites examined in the survey area have at least a ceramic and numismatic or a numismatic and/or epigraphic dating. Evidence clearly shows the continuation of civic life at the larger conurbations, with inscriptions from *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* and Turda-*Potaissa* suggesting the continuation of town life into the late 250s and possibly beyond. Furthermore, the numismatic presence into the sole reign of Gallienus at Partoş-*Apulum*, and Aurelian at Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, Cluj-Napoca also hint at the fact that activity may have continued at these sites well into the latest stages of Roman control and perhaps beyond.

8.3 Construction at towns

The evidence for mid-third century construction at towns in the region was limited to *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, *Partoș-Apulum*, *Alba Iulia-Apulum*, *Turda-Potaissa*, *Cluj-Napoca*, and *Moigrad-Porolissum* (fig. 8.2). Notably, there is no evidence for construction at any of the three small towns in the survey area, but this is likely due to the lack of intensive archaeological investigation at these sites than any other factors.

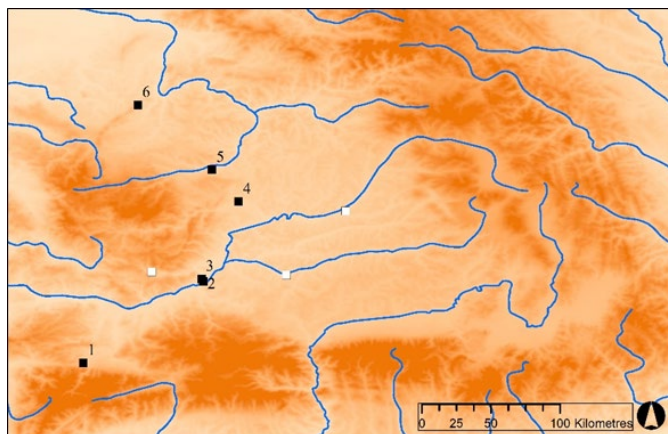


Figure 8. 2: Construction at towns in Transylvania

1. *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* 2. *Partoș-Apulum* 3. *Alba Iulia-Apulum* 4. *Turda-Apulum* 5. *Cluj-Napoca* 6. *Moigrad-Porolissum*

8.3.1 Evidence for construction at towns

At *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, a building inscription without a findspot is known from within the town walls for a temple to *Dea Regina*, erected by M. Cominus Quintus and his wife (IDR III/2, 108). Schäfer (2007, 110) posits this may possibly have been the *sacerdos area Augusti* under Gordian III. However, the inscription is generally dated to the second quarter of the third century (Schäfer 2007, 110). Thus, a secure dating for construction based on this find is not possible.¹³³

The supposed collapse and repair of buildings 1 (*horreum*), 3, and 4 inside the town walls was dated to the mid-third century without dating evidence (Daicoviciu and Alicu 1984, 84), and it is tempting to believe that this date was offered because it is seen as the probable end of civic life in Roman *Dacia*. The interpretation was that the buildings had collapsed in an earthquake (Daicoviciu and Alicu 1984, 84). However, Hügel (2003, 150 note 210) rightly stated that

¹³³ Schäfer (2007, 112) further states that the erection of new statues under Gallienus were occasionally witnessed, but without a clear explanation to the reasoning. Indeed, while the final construction phase, III C, of the forum was found to begin under the reign of Severus Alexander and last until the end of the Roman period, there is no confidently dated stratigraphic evidence in the period after Severus Alexander in the forum (Étienne et al. 2006, 91).

this interpretation is suspect, as there is there is no evidence for earthquake damage anywhere else at the site.

Outside of the town walls, construction phase 4 of EM 24 saw a change in the layout of the building, with the addition of apsidal rooms (Daicoviciu and Alicu 1989-1993, 411). This construction phase was dated to the mid-third century, but no concise dating evidence was given. Further, the construction of a new building, EM 23, with the character of a *villa suburbana* was found to have been built sometime ca. 250-270 based on the find of a predecessor to a Keller type 1 crossbow brooch in the construction levels of the structure (Dawson 1989-1993; 2015, 91; Diaconescu et al. 2006, 886). Therefore, much of the evidence from *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* is suspect. Outside of the dating of construction of EM 23, the remainder of the evidence for period construction leaves much to be desired.

At Partoș-*Apulum*, Drâmbărean et al. (2000, 146-147) stated on the basis of excavation that a pottery kiln was constructed inside of what appeared to be a massive structure towards the western end of the town walls, likely in the mid-third century. However, no justification for this dating is given except for the presence of small finds and ceramic evidence pointing to a wide timespan from the second to the end of the third century (Drâmbărean et al 2000, 146-147). The site was heavily truncated by the installation of a railroad in the mid-nineteenth century, which has led to difficulty in interpreting later phases of the site. Furthermore, excavations of the site in the early twentieth century interpreted the transformation of a high-status residence into a workshop as taking place sometime around 240 (Cserni 1913, 14). While no dating evidence is given for this development either, it can be assumed that it was likely based on coin finds.

At Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, the final phase of construction of the governor's palace was dated to the second quarter of the third century, but no dating criteria is given for this (Rusu-Bolindeț et al. 2011, 20).

Evidence from rescue excavations at Dealul Furcilor-Brândușei also at Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, found that new structures L11 and L12 were constructed in the mid-third century based on evidence from previous layers which included a brick stamp of the *XIII Gemina* with the epithet *Antoniniana*, given to the legion during the reign of Caracalla in the early third century and coins from the Severan period (Ciobanu et al. 2000, 301-302). Furthermore, construction period 4 of a nearby large and ornate *villa* structure with intricate wall paintings was found to contain repairs to a wall surface in order to reinforce the installation of a new floor, the installation of new hypocaust pillars made of broken brick fragments from the previous

hypocaust installation (Ciobanu 2005, 130). While there were fewer fragments of ornate wall plaster, this latest phase also appeared to be highly decorated (Ciobanu 2015, 130). Though no substantial dating evidence is given, this latest construction phase was deemed to be in the advanced third century (Ciobanu 2005).

Furthermore, the new construction of a Roman structure was found to destroy part of the *agger* and the *berma* of the town's wall, suggesting to the excavators that the town was effectively decommissioned at the end of the Roman period (Ciobanu and Rustoiu 2003, 218). However, the small quantity and poor quality of finds associated with the structure made any precise dating impossible (Ciobanu and Rustoiu 2003, 217).

At Turda-*Potaissa*, the only evidence for construction is the already mentioned inscription commemorating the completion of a temple to *Deo Azizo Bono Puero Conservatori* by the legate of the *V Macedonica* between 256-258 (CIL III 1176).

The best sequenced evidence for mid-third century construction in a town setting comes from modern rescue excavations at Cluj-Napoca, which resulted in the confirmation of both occupation and construction of sites in the mid-third century.

A stone *domus* structure in the northeast area of the Roman town was found to have endured numerous repairs and enlargements throughout the third century. A coin find of Caracalla as co-emperor of Septimius Severus was found under the initial foundation levels along with a brooch with returned foot, generally dated to the third century, was found in a pit underneath the initial floor level, giving a *terminus post quem* of the early third century for construction (Diaconescu 2012a). Wall Z5 was the initial northern limit of the building, but a long corridor was later erected towards the yard via wall Z4 (Diaconescu 2012a, 130). The floor of the corridor was originally made of clay, likely covered with planks, with a later phase of *opus signinum* and a final layer of gravel, on top of which white mortar was added. Although a second coin of Caracalla was found in the fill layer above the second phase of the corridor, a Hercules club bone pendant dated to the late third-fourth centuries was found below the final floor phase of the corridor (Diaconescu 2012a, 131). This led the excavators to the conclusion that the building was in use well after the mid-third century (Diaconescu 2012a, 131). Furthermore, an early form crossbow brooch was found in the uppermost layers of the Roman yard, which led to further assertion by the excavators that the second phase of the *domus* was in use past 250 (Diaconescu 2012a, 131).

Other recent excavations detected occupation layers that were deemed to be mid-third century in the courtyard of the Art Museum (Antal and Pupeză 2012), at an *insula* in the northeast

quadrant of the Roman town (Rusu-Bolindeț and Popescu 2012), and at a Roman dwelling at Strada Victor Deleu (Cociș et al. 1995). However, the latest dated finds in all three of these excavations were coins from the Severan period. Despite this, in each case the excavators felt that the sites continued into the mid-third century.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, a lack of recorded stratigraphy and phasing has meant that the *domus* structure in the northeast corner of the town is the only site that offers clear evidence for building well through the third century.

At Moigrad-*Porolissum*, structural sequences from within the settlement have only been very partially illuminated. The inscription commemorating the construction of a temple to *Jupiter Dolichenus* under Gordian III (AE 2001, 1707=AE 2006, 1125=ILD 683), mentioned in section 8.2.1, remains the only clear indication of building work at this time. Due to the use of the epithet *felix* for Gordian III, the excavators who recovered the inscription, dated it and the temple's completion to 241-244 (Gudea and Tamba 2001, 54; Tamba 2008, 197).¹³⁵

Further evidence comes from the excavation of what may have been a forum space in the town, though the excavators were in doubt as to the interpretation of this space (De Sena and Wanner 2016). The latest phases of occupation were dated 260-271 and consisted of three hearths constructed out of concrete in an apsidal room of the supposed forum structure (De Sena and Wanner 2016, 310). No dating criteria are given and the historic implications of the date range are suspect, perhaps locked into the notion that the trans-Danubian provinces of Roman *Dacia* were abandoned in 271. However, all features from this period were found beneath sealed stone and tile rubble layers, indicating that they were in use when the walls and roofs of the structures were still intact. Though initially considered to show evidence of post-Roman activity, the lack of fourth century finds however defined, and the use of concrete in the construction of features led to the conclusion that all features must date from the period of Roman occupation (De Sena and Wanner 2016, 311).¹³⁶ However, in contrast to the conclusions of the excavators, it is important to note that the occupation of these features may have continued on well beyond the date of their construction. Unfortunately, there is no clear

¹³⁴ While the coins were found in the Roman occupation layers at Strada Victor Deleu (Cociș et al. 1995, 640) and the *insula* (Rusu-Bolindeț and Popescu 2012, 242), the coin find from the courtyard came from a medieval occupation layer, which indeed adds to the dubiousness of the conclusion (Antal and Pupeză 2012, 89).

¹³⁵ Gudea and Tamba (2001, 25, 66-71) also interpreted this inscription as mentioning a *colonia*, which more recent interpretation has seen as 'coh[ortis]' rather than 'col[oniae]'. However, their reading led them to posit that a second town was established nearby. However, this is highly unlikely based on the present state of knowledge.

¹³⁶ See De Sena and Wanner (2010, 18-20) for the preliminary interpretation of post-Roman occupation at the site.

publication of the stratigraphic sequences available and in the absence of such material the longevity of activity at the site must remain unknown.

8.3.2 Conclusions

Hügel (2003, 148) correctly stated that the evidence for the later phases of occupation at Roman towns in the region left much to be desired when compared to the evidence offered by military sites. While this is due to the focus of archaeological investigation on fort sites, some important conclusions can be reached about later construction at towns in Transylvania. Epigraphic evidence of the construction of temples at Turda-*Potaissa* in the late 250s and Moigrad-*Porolissum* in the early 240s demonstrates the continuation of religious life and the erection of public buildings, at least on some level. Moreover, the evidence of new and renovated *domus* from *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, and Cluj-Napoca, and the maintenance of the dwelling in Alba Iulia-*Apulum* seems to show that even in these later phases of Roman occupation and perhaps beyond, there were still sectors of the population who were investing in their futures in the region (Diaconescu 2004, 132).¹³⁷ Furthermore, the new archaeological evidence from Cluj-Napoca of at least one *insula* in use beyond the Severan period, and the maintenance and construction on the *domus* conflicts with the view that the settlement was already declining importance by the mid-third century (Diaconescu 2004, 134). It is also still possible to assume that at Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, some level of upkeep of the settlement took place due to the continued repair of the high-status dwelling at Strada Brândușei. The evidence at Partoș-*Apulum* and Moigrad-*Porolissum* may depict a different scenario. High-status private structures at Partoș-*Apulum* were converted into spaces for industrial use, while similar transformations seem to be happening in the forum precinct at Moigrad-*Porolissum* as the century advanced. Thus, the transition into a more pragmatic usage of space as seen at military sites in the region is still in question. The evidence seems to be split between the upkeep of high-status buildings at some sites and the repurposing of said structures at others. Such is the case even at sites within close vicinity to each other, like Partoș-*Apulum* and Alba Iulia-*Apulum*.

8.4 Demolition at towns

As with forts, there is little evidence for demolition at towns in the region. What there is, is limited to two sites, Partoș-*Apulum* and Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, both part of the wider *Apulum* conurbation (*fig. 8.3*).

¹³⁷ Diaconescu (2004, 132 note 155) states that he found a similar construction at Partoș, however, this is unfortunately not published.

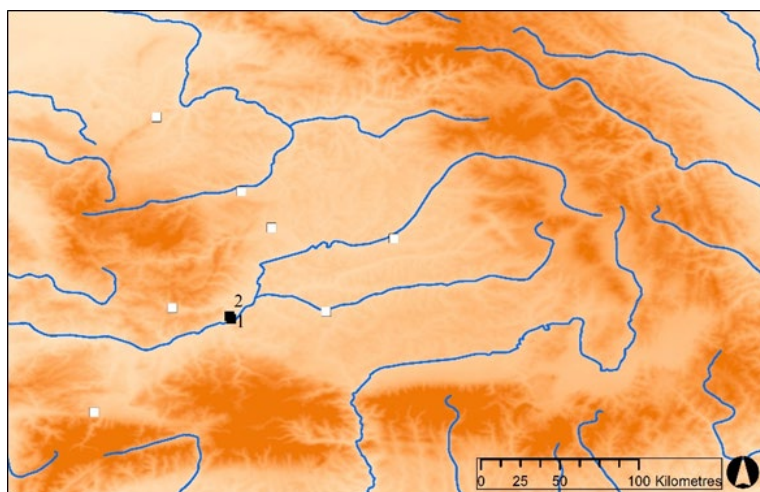


Figure 8. 3: Demolition at towns in Transylvania

1. Partoş-*Apulum* 2. Alba Iulia-*Apulum*

At Partoş-*Apulum*, two brooches with returned foot and a sestertius of Philip the Arab dated 246-247 were found in a levelling layer within the sanctuary of *Liber Pater* (Bogdan and Cociş 2006, 223-224).

The excavators of structure L4 at Dealul Furcilor-Brânduşei determined that a series of domestic pits were dug into the floor and backfilled with much ceramic material sometime in the second half of the third century. This was based on the construction of the building in the early third century (Ciobanu et al. 2000, 298). No detailed rationale is offered, however, and all that can be said is that this took place sometime after the initial construction.

Given that only the levelling layer from Partoş-*Apulum* is dated to the survey period with finds evidence, there is not much of a conclusion that can be reached about the evidence for demolition more generally, but the possibility that the levelling was linked to the development of the *Liber Pater* sanctuary for further ceramic productions has compelling implications for later activity in the town. Unfortunately, attempts to date kilns in the later sequences of the via archaeomagnetic dating failed (Ian Haynes, *pers. comm.*).

8.5 Destruction at towns

Only three sites show evidence for destruction, *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, Cluj-Napoca, and Moigrad-*Porolissum* (fig. 8.4). In all three cases, the evidence for burning layers were confined to single structures, appearing to be isolated incidents rather than a programme of intentional destruction.

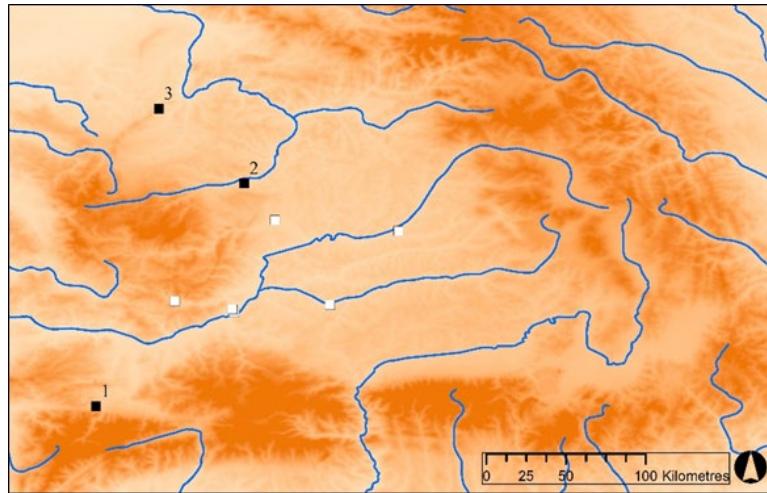


Figure 8. 4: Destruction at towns in Transylvania

1. Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa 2. Cluj-Napoca 3. Moigrad-Porolissum

At *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, the Temple of *Silvanus* was destroyed in a fire, with coins of Gordian III (238-244) and Gallienus (253-268) found in the destruction deposits (Daicoviciu and Alicu 1984, 129). A fire was also noted in the final phases of the *aedes fabrum*, which contained small pieces of bronze, likely from patches covering blow holes on the statues (Diaconescu 2004, 130). Further signs of disruption included the fragments of statues of *Aescuplapius* in the fill of a well associated with his temple (Daicoviciu et al. 1975, 228-229; Daicoviciu and Alicu 1981, 60).

The *area sacra* of the governor's residence also showed evidence of statue bases being overturned and the subsequent destruction of their statues (Piso 1983, 233; 1998). Diaconescu (2004, 131) interprets these acts as an official rejection of the imperial authority, perhaps by Christians. This conclusion was influenced by the discovery nearby of a 'Roman-style' dish made with a coarse black fabric and incised with a Chi-Rho (Diaconescu 2004, 131; Daicoviciu 1981, 619-623). However, there are two issues with this interpretation. The vandalism of these sites may have taken place some time after the abandonment of the interior of the town. Furthermore, while the dish is from the general area, its dating is unclear. Even if it is contemporary with the *area sacra*, it can hardly be understood to be linked to the cause and effect in the destruction of the complex.

Excavations of the Roman dwelling at Strada Victor Deleu found that the structure was destroyed in a fire (Cociş et al. 1995, 640). As the latest coin finds from the site date from the reign of Severus Alexander, it was the opinion of the excavators that the fire occurred sometime after 235, likely towards the middle of the third century (Cociş et al. 1995, 640). While there is no definitive mid-third century material from the site, it is plausible that the fire could have taken place in the mid-third century.

At Moigrad-*Porolissum*, the temple of *Jupiter Dolichenus* was burnt down a fire, which the excavators interpreted as evidence of violent action, rather than the outcome of an accident (Tamba 2008, 197). The conclusion was reached that the fire took place sometime between 253-255 based on single coin finds from the temple and the discovery of a hoard of 41 silver coins ranging from the reign of Septimius Severus to that of Volusian with a closing date of 253 (Gudea and Tamba 2001, 35-37; Tamba 2008, 197).

Given the sparse information, less can be said about the evidence for destruction at towns in the region than the forts themselves. While there is some evidence at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* for intentional destruction of certain sites, this was most likely a single series of events resulting from the actions of a range of agents with possibly diverse motives. However, there is no evidence for any Carpic or Gothic incursions in the archaeological record.

8.6 Hoarding at towns

In every discussion of hoards as historical evidence, it is useful to recall Reece's (1988) profound reservations about their use to construct narratives. This has particular resonance when the hoards from the Roman towns of Transylvania are considered. Evidence for mid-third century hoarding was present at four different sites in the region, *Alba Iulia-Apulum*, *Turda-Potaissa*, *Cristești*, and *Moigrad-Porolissum* (fig. 8.5). There was no evidence for material hoarding during the survey period, and thus all the examples are monetary.

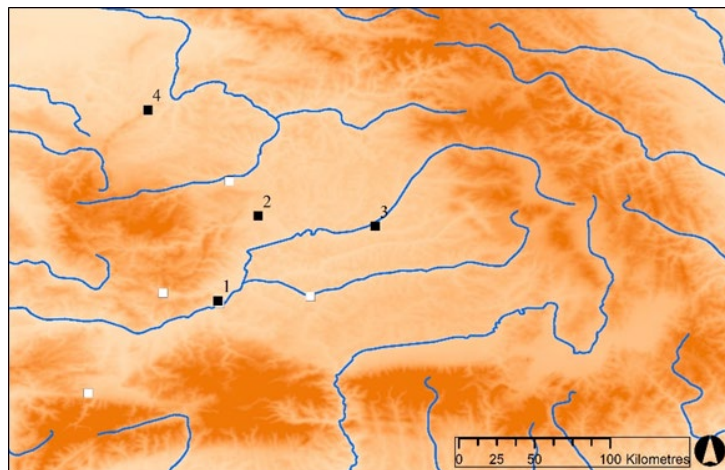


Figure 8. 5: Hoarding at towns in Transylvania

1. *Alba Iulia-Apulum* 2. *Turda-Potaissa* 3. *Cristești* 4. *Moigrad-Porolissum*

8.6.1 Evidence for hoarding at towns

All five mid-third century hoards from *Alba Iulia-Apulum* have known findspots. These include one with a closing date under the region of Philip the Arab, three under Gallienus'

sole reign, and one under Aurelian. Hoards Alba Iulia II and III were found during excavation of the provincial governor's palace in 1903 and 1905, respectively (Cserni 1903; 1908). Both hoards, however, were lost during the First World War (Găzdac et al. 2009, 6).

Alba Iulia II was found during the excavation of a pit in the palace. Cserni (1903, 94) initially stated that it consisted of 115 coins, but then mentioned a find of 315 coins in the same area of the palace (Găzdac et al. 2009, 6). The documentation of the hoard was first examined by Winkler (1971, 368), who claimed that hoard was deposited during the abandonment of the province under Gallienus, though no justification for this interpretation is given or discussed. Găzdac et al. (2009, 6) claim, however, to have been able to attribute 286 (28 denarii and 258 antoniniani) coins to the hoard, through a re-examination of the initial documentation. The adjusted contents of the hoard as given by Găzdac et al. (2009, 35-46) have an opening date of 193 under Septimius Severus, and a closing date of 260-268 under the sole reign of Gallienus.

Similar problems were found with Alba Iulia III, which was reportedly found in a clay pot and coming from the bath complex in the governor's palace (Cserni 1908). It is curious that a hoard would be deposited in the bath house were it still functioning, but the details of the find are too vague to interpret the evidence further. In reworking the documentation, Găzdac et al. (2009, 47-57) were able to identify 232 (93 denarii and 136 antoniniani) of the 235 coins, with an opening date of 194-195 under Septimius Severus and 270-275 under Aurelian, leaving three coins unidentified.

Although developments in furthering the identification of these hoards have taken place, the fact remains that they are both still lost to posterity, and therefore an accurate count and identification of the coins cannot be taken into account. While Diaconescu (2004, 135) states that the presence of Alba Iulia III demonstrates that the governor's staff was still in place during the reign of Aurelian, with the physical contents of the hoard not present and three coins still remaining unidentified, there is still uncertainty over the contents, the closing date, and the broader significance of this find.

The three remaining hoards from Alba Iulia-*Apulum* were all found during construction works. Alba Iulia IV was found in March 1963 during sewage works near the legionary fortress on Bulevardul 6 Martie in the rubble of a Roman wall (Pavel 1976). The hoard was contained within a bronze vessel which was destroyed during the sewage works (Pavel 1976, 73). The hoard contained 1213 silver coins, 1209 (212 denarii and 997 antoniniani) of which were identified and opened in 216 under Caracalla and closed 260-268 under Gallienus, though large quantities began to be accumulated with coins of Gordian III (Pavel 1976, 74).

Though Pavel (1976, 78-80) states that the hoard likely was the savings hoard of a merchant who conducted business with the soldiers inside the fort, she claimed that the hoard was deposited due to pressure of barbarian raiding in the region that began during the time of Valerian. While it is important to reiterate that there is no evidence to substantiate such a claim, the lack of full context for the find leaves in doubt how and if it was buried.

Furthermore, Petac (1998-2003), attempting to recalibrate the later coinage using Göbl's (2000) dating of the coins of Valerian and Gallienus, stated that none of the coins post-dated 260. Therefore, he stated the find would be consistent with the abandonment of the region under Gallienus (Petac 1998-2003, 33).

Alba Iulia V was found in a garden at Bulevardul 1 Decembrie 1918 nr. 8 wrapped inside a piece of cloth (Pavel 1996-1997). The cloth was supposedly found in a clump of dirt that had originally been deposited in the garden from Maieri cemetery, which is located south of the legionary fortress on Bulevardul Încoronării. The hoard was completely recovered and all coins were identified. It consisted of 130 coins (109 denarii and 21 antoniniani), the earliest from 189 under Commodus and the latest 244-249 under Philip the Arab. The majority of coins were denarii of Elgabalus and Severus Alexander (Pavel 1996-1997). Hoards closing under Gordian III and Philip the Arab have been interpreted as reflecting the fear and violence of a Carpic invasion into both Transylvania and the Lower Danube region (Gerov 1977, 127-131; Găzdac 2012, 175), but it is important to recall the lack of any archaeological evidence from Transylvania indicating such an invasion (Diaconescu 2004, 129-130). Furthermore, no real archaeological context for this hoard makes interpretation difficult.

The final hoard from Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia VII, was found during construction of a house in the area of the Roman town on Strada Lalelelor (Ardevan et al. 2003). The find consisted of 872 silver coins, only two of which were unidentified, the earliest dated 190 under Commodus and the latest dated 260-268 under Gallienus (Ardevan et al. 2003). The hoard was found in a bronze vessel without a lid, and the coins were heavily corroded, and it is possible that the entire hoard was not recovered (Ardevan et al. 2003). Thus, evidence from Alba Iulia VII is also less complete than ideally desired, and the possibility that there are missing coins means that the closing date may in fact be later than the initial report suggests.

Turda I was discovered in 1932 on the plateau of Dealul Cetății, overlooking the fortress (Pîslaru 2012, 117-119). The hoard was partially dispersed, and most of the coins recovered were found some 50cm below the ground surface (Pîslaru 2012, 117). It appears that the entire hoard was not unearthed. The extant assemblage consists of 211 coins (106 denarii and 105 antoniniani) and cover a range from 194 under Septimius Severus to 242 under Gordian

III (Pîslaru 2012, 118). The hoard only contained issues of Septimius Severus, Severus Alexander, and Gordian III, leading to the conclusion that the coins had been specially selected and were a legionary's savings hoard that they had accumulated upon return from the Sassanid campaigns of Gordian III (Pîslaru 2012, 217-218). Though Pîslaru (2012, 219) cautions about attributing the hoard to the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab, she ultimately concludes that this event is the most likely explanation for their deposition. Here again, the lack of clarity concerning the provenance of the find and the fact that the hoard is incomplete limits the amount of interpretive work that can be undertaken.

Cristești I was found in September 1963 during construction works of a new building (Protase and Zrínyi 1965). The coins were found in a rose-coloured clay pot, which had been deposited vertically (Protase and Zrínyi 1965). Only 118 (108 denarii and 10 antoniniani) of the original ca. 150 coins discovered were present when the find was taken to the museum, and they ranged in date from 162 under Marcus Aurelius to 243 under Gordian III (Protase and Zrínyi 1965). Thus, with 32 coins missing from the assemblage, it is again difficult to state with confidence whether the closing date is accurate of the hoard's archaeological context.

The two final hoards come from the temple of *Jupiter Dolichenus* at Moigrad-*Porolissum*. They were both found in excavation, the first in 1996 and the second in 1998 (Gudea and Tamba 2001, 35-37). The first hoard, Porolissum I, contained 21 silver coins (nine denarii and twelve antoniniani), opening in 203 under Septimius Severus and closing 249-251 under Trajan Decius (Gudea and Tamba 2001, 35-37; Găzduc and Gudea 2006, 114-15). The second hoard, Porolissum II, contained 41 silver coins (six denarii and 35 antoniniani), opening in 196 under Septimius Severus and closing 251-253 under Trebonianus Gallus (Gudea and Tamba 2001, 35-57; Găzduc and Gudea 2006, 115-117). Both hoards were found *in situ* inside room b, along the northeast wall near the main pedestal of the temple (Gudea and Tamba 2001, 35-37). While these two hoards were found in excavation and fully recovered, the full report containing stratigraphic information has still not been published. The interpretation of the hoards from Moigrad-*Porolissum* as votive offerings (Găzduc and Gudea 2006, 22) seems plausible given the context and the findspot, but not definitive.

8.6.2 Conclusions

In the entire assemblage of period hoards from towns in the region, only the two found in the temple of *Jupiter Dolichenus* were both fully-recovered and found in modern excavation. While Alba Iulia V, the only other hoard to be fully-recovered and identified, lacks detailed information on its archaeological context. Ultimately, this leaves little that can be said with

confidence about both the hoards and what they might say about the region. While the hoards of Gordian III and Philip the Arab from Alba Iulia, Turda, and Cristești have recently been used as evidence to support the possibility of a Carpic invasion into the region (Găzdac 2012, 175, 194), either the provenance is unclear, as with Alba Iulia V, or the hoards have not been fully recovered and identified as is the case with Turda I and Cristești I. Therefore, it is hard to link them with confidence to a notional Carpic invasion into Transylvania. While it is striking that three of the five hoards from Alba Iulia-*Apulum* have supposed closing dates under the sole reign of Gallienus (Alba Iulia II, IV, VII), the poor recording and subsequent loss of Alba Iulia II, the reinterpretation of Alba Iulia IV, and the likelihood that a high number of coins are missing from Alba Iulia VII also means the value of these hoards as a source is diminished. This creates and reinforces a situation where poor-quality evidence has then been used to reinforce the narrative set by assumed historical events. Thus, a perpetual reinforcement of conclusions not based on archaeological data continues.

8.9 Towns conclusions

Although the data for activity in towns from the third century onwards is not nearly as extensive as for military sites, there are still a few conclusions that can be made about the overall assemblage of sites (*tab. 8.1*). While it is still impossible from the data at present to conclude how towns in the region ‘died’ (Diaconescu 2004, 129), it is possible to observe that that aspects of Roman civic life, from public engagement to the maintenance of high-status dwellings continued late into the final period of Roman administration. This is noted via the construction of *domus*-style residences at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, and Cluj Napoca, as well as the epigraphic evidence for the construction of temples at Turda-*Potaissa* and Moigrad-*Porolissum*. Furthermore, the lack of any real destruction at any of the towns save for isolated fires at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, Cluj-Napoca, and Moigrad-*Porolissum* also imply that there was no abrupt end to the built landscape of these settlements. Hoards have been used to try and tie historic events into the life cycles of these towns, despite the suspect nature of the evidence; however, their presence is nonetheless a potential sign of activity. Though the evidence has many factors that inhibit complex interpretation, it would suggest that the continuation of town life continued late into the 250s, and perhaps beyond.

Site Name	Construction/Repair	Demolition	Destruction	Hoarding
Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa				
Zlatna				
Partos-Apulum				
Alba Iulia-Apulum				
Micasasa				
Turda-Potaissa				
Cristesti				
Cluj-Napoca				
Moigrad-Porolissum				

Table 8. 1: Evidence for mid-third century activity at towns in Transylvania

8.9 Rural sites in the mid-third century

Overall, despite the large number of rural sites known, very few have yielded tightly datable material from excavated contexts.¹³⁸ There are no inscriptions known from excavation, coins are few in number and as has been repeatedly noted, dating of ceramic forms is underdeveloped. Therefore, while fourteen sites were found that the excavators deemed to have evidence of mid-third century activity, there is very little stratigraphic evidence to suggest such conclusions (*fig. 8.6*). Furthermore, outside of gazetteers of rural sites in the region (Mitrofan 1973; 1974; Popa 2002; Gudea 2008a) there is little to no synthesis on findings from rural sites. Indeed, Hügel (2003, 150) devotes only five lines to rural sites, stating that at the present time, the appreciation of nuances of the contextual data was still lacking. This is still largely the case, however it is still important to examine what evidence does exist.

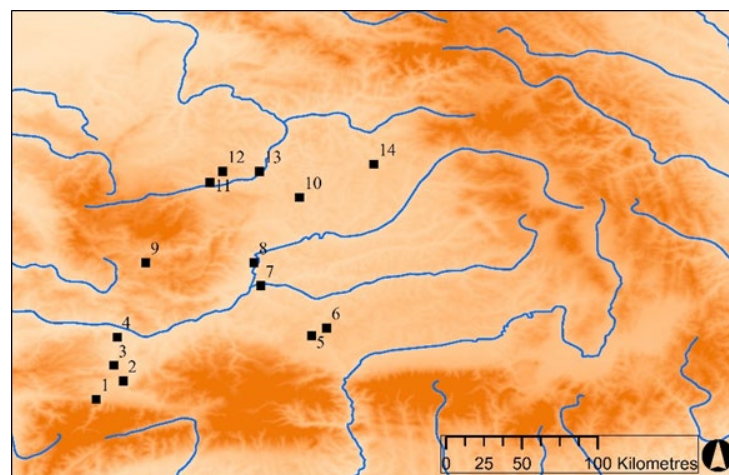


Figure 8. 6: Mid-third century rural settlements in Transylvania.

1. Hobita 2. Hațeg 3. Cinciș 4. Deva 5. Ocna Sibiului 6. Slimnic 7. Obreja 8. Aiud 9. Roșia Montană 10. Sopor de Câmpie
11. Suceagu-Radaia 12. Chinteni 13. Juc-Herghelie 14. Archiud

¹³⁸ Popa (2002, 221) states there are at least 590 rural sites with enough evidence to consider a Roman settlement, with at least 97 of these being *villae*.

8.9.1 Rural sites with ceramic dating

Only six rural sites in the study had any evidence of ceramic dating; Deva, Ocna Sibiului, Slimnic, Obreja, Roşia Montană, and Suceagu. Out of these six, only the publications relating to Sliminc, Roşia Montană, and Suceagu seek to date the ceramics found more tightly than to a general 'Roman period' date range.

At Deva, imported and local Samian was dated solely to the Roman period (Marghitan 1998, 323). No mid-third century coinage was found at the site, but a denarius of Severus Alexander dated to 227 led to the suggestion that the site lasted into the mid-third century (Marghitan 1998, 323).

There is no discussion on the dating of ceramics at Ocna Sibiului beyond the fact that they are Roman, let alone discussion of finds or stratigraphy, however the site was considered to last to the end of the Roman period (Protase 1968).

Pitchers with incised decoration found in semi-hut 2 at the native rural settlement at Slimnic were dated to the mid-third century based on parallel finds south of the Carpathians associated with coin hoards ending with Philip the Arab (Glodariu 1981, 49). There is no relevant numismatic dating from the site.

Protase (2002, 195-196) stated that the local and imported wares at the native rural settlement at Obreja dated from the Roman period of the second-third centuries, but that some forms found in a sealed context with a crossbow brooch may point to later usage as well. No relevant numismatic material is known from the site, though a coin of Probus dated to 280 was found nearby in 1962 (Protase 2002, 170).

The dating evidence from Roşia Montană is based across numerous rural sites within the vicinity of the Roman mines, with ceramic evidence coming from Găuri-Hop-Botar, Drumuş, and Balea.

The mining settlement at Găuri-Hop-Botar contained ceramic material that suggested to the excavators occupancy ranging beyond the mid-third century (Damian et al. 2010, 82-83). However, the actual date ranges attributed to the recovered ceramics are very broad, ranging from late second, second-third, and the third centuries (Damian et al. 2010, 93-94).

The religious cult building at Drumuş (building T II), was stated to last into the first half of the third century based on the ceramic dating (Crăciun and Sion 2010, 287). One sherd, the lip of a plate was dated to the first half of the third century based on parallels from Slăveni,

Drobeta, and Stolniceni (Crăciun and Sion 2010, 300), though the grounds for dating these analogies to this period are themselves unclear.

The homestead at Balea on Carpeni Hill had pottery dated to the second and third centuries based on vessels that have a long chronological circulation (Rusu-Bolindeț et al. 2010, 382, 387), but no greater precision was possible. No more tightly datable imported wares were found, and no relevant coin finds were associated with any of the sites at Roșia Montană.

Suceagu is the final site where an attempt has been made to date the pottery. A range given from the Antonine period until 270, roughly equating to the end of the province, was proposed for the assemblage of local stamped wares (Lăzărescu et al. 2016, 59). No relevant numismatic finds were associated with the site.

Thus, even in the best of circumstances with rural sites, the ceramic dating follows the circular argument that Roman ceramics span the existence of Roman occupation and therefore must be an indicator of site occupation into the mid-third century and later. Furthermore, only Deva had evidence for any coinage, and this dates from the period immediately before the mid-third century. Therefore, there is a real difficulty in independently determining evidence for mid-third century occupation at these sites outside of trusting the opinion of the excavators.

8.9.2 Rural sites without ceramic dating

Out of the remaining eight sites, five produced third century coinage. These were Hobița with a coin of Elagabalus dated to 222 (Floca 1953, 753-754), Hațeg with a coin of Septimius Severus dated 201-210 (Popa 1972, 447), Chineteni with a coin dated to 228 (Alicu 1998, 140)¹³⁹, the native settlement at Archiud with a denarius of Severus dated to 222-235 (Protase 2009, 31), and Juc Herghelie with a denarius of Gordian III dated to 241 (Diaconescu 2012b, 58). Without the aid of stratigraphy, only one of these sites produced any tangible evidence of mid-third century activity; Juc-Herghelie. However, this may be due to its interpretation as a supplier of horses for the military (Diaconescu 2012b).

No discussion of the ceramic assemblage or coin finds is offered in reports on the remaining three sites, Cinciș, Aiud, and Sopor de Câmpie. At Cinciș, it was the opinion of the excavators that the *villa* and cemetery lasted during the Roman period but gave no justification for the conclusion (Floca and Valea 1965, 167, 189, 192). At Aiud, the excavators admitted that there was no material from the excavation to be able to date the *villa*,

¹³⁹ Presumably of Severus Alexander, though this is not explicitly stated. The only other coin mentioned by Alicu (1998, 132) is an issue of Elagablaus.

but based on similarities to other rural sites in Transylvania and coin finds from the wider region. They suggested that the site was occupied to the ‘end’ of the Roman period (Winkler et al. 1968).

The cemetery from the native settlement at Sopor de Câmpie was deemed to have lasted into the last decades of the third century based on a spherical pendant brooch found in grave 1, which was dated to the two decades immediately following 275, and from grave 8, which contained a brooch with twisted leg, which was given a similar dating (Protase 1976, 66, 82). While the justification for dating occupation at Cinciş and Aiud is flimsy at best, the dating of the native settlement at Sopor de Câmpie based on the grave goods may provide a *terminus ante quem* for abandonment of the site. However, the identification of the brooches used to date the site is now over 40 years old. Reworking of the site assemblage may lead to different conclusions.

Therefore, it is important to state that outside of the site of Juc-Herghelie where there is a definitive mid-third century coin find, activity is not necessarily a given at any of these sites. The lack of transparency and definition in the dating of ceramics leaves this in question as well. Thus, at sites where there is earlier third century coinage, as at Hobiţa, Haţeg, Deva, Chinteni, and Archiud, there is a plausibility of mid-third century activity as well, though this is not a given. The chance find of the coin of Probus at Obreja may also provide evidence of a continuity of settlement, but the fact that it is a stray find from the area and not the site itself also leaves this interpretation in doubt.

8.10 Construction at rural sites

Evidence for mid-third century construction is altogether missing from rural sites in the region outside of the sites of Chinteni and Archiud (*fig. 8.7*).

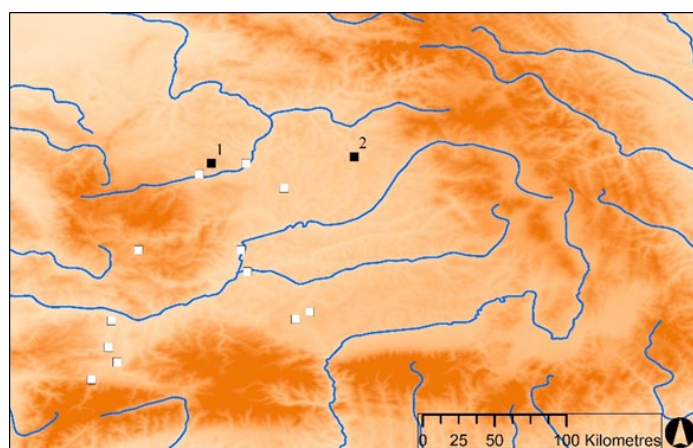


Figure 8. 7: Construction at rural settlements in Transylvania

1. Chinteni 2. Archiud

8.10.1 Evidence for construction at rural sites

The clearest evidence for mid-third century construction comes from the *villa* at Chinteni (Alicu 1994). A coin found in the mortar of one of the bastions of the circuit wall around this *villa* indicates that construction of the wall occurred sometime during or after the reign of Elagabalus (Alicu 1998, 132). Features only dated to the third century included building phase three, where a corridor was constructed and divided into two sections by a transverse wall. The courtyard was also divided by a wall, likely into two sections. The wall between rooms 7 and 1 was completely destroyed and rebuilt 2-3m to the west. Room 7 was then levelled and paved over with stone, possibly converted into a courtyard (Alicu 1998, 132).¹⁴⁰ Further construction took place at an advanced period perhaps in the later third century, including the removal of the wall separating rooms 5 and 4 down to its foundations and the installation of a clay floor (Alicu 1998, 132-133). The construction of a brick wall bonded with a clay different than that used in other parts of the structure between rooms 7 and 5 was then followed by the addition of a brick vault covering the slab pavement (Alicu 1998, 132-133). Thus, while the dating evidence at Chinteni is not necessarily clear cut, the careful description of the stratigraphic sequence helps with interpretation. Though the opinion of the excavator was that these two building phases took place at opposite ends of the third century, there is still a possibility that they took place in a shorter time span.

At the native settlement at Archiud, seven dwellings, nrs. 5, 8, 10, 13-14, and 19 were interpreted as being built in the mid-third century, and then occupied until the fourth (Protase 2009, 17-20). Ultimately, this dating is based solely on the presence of two coins, a denarius of Caracalla dated 211-217, and a denarius of Severus Alexander dated 222-235 (Protase 2009, 31). However, with a lack of clear stratigraphic sequences, it is difficult to assess how accurate these claims are.

8.10.2 Conclusions

There is not much that can be said given the evidence from only two sites. The evidence from Chinteni, despite the variability in its dating, would suggest that at least at this particular site, there was no intention of abandoning the site in the mid-third century. The presence of later construction indeed indicates an investment in maintaining the site. While there may have been further evidence at other sites, the level of recording and/or method of excavation has meant that these features are not perceptible in the record.

¹⁴⁰ Though Alicu (1998, 132, 141) initially states that building phase three is 'third century', a later date of 'Severan' is given based on coin finds of Elagabalus and presumably Severus Alexander, leaving some uncertainty in the overall dating.

8.10 Destruction at rural sites

Only one site, Hobita, had any evidence for burning layers in the final occupation layers of the site. The entire *villa* was destroyed in a fire, with a high presence of charcoal and brick across the entire site (Floca 1954, 753-754). Floca (1954, 754) claims that the wooden structures of the site appeared to have been destroyed via a violent action, which would have occurred in conjunction with the events that determined the abandonment of the province. However, the fire may have just as well have been accidental. Furthermore, it is important to reiterate the lack of evidence form destruction in this region during the mid-third century, intentional or otherwise.

8.11 Rural site conclusions

Hügel's (2003, 150) assertion that the evidence from rural sites lacks the nuances needed still holds true to a large extent. A serious discussion of the dating evidence at once encounters difficulties given the limited amount of high-quality stratigraphic excavation that has taken place, and the linked shortage of reliable dated type series. Consequently, little can be said, even from a basic dating standpoint when it comes to rural sites in the region (*tab 8.2*). However, it is necessary to still work through the material from the sites in order to assess the quality of the data.

Outside of Chinteni, there is little excavated evidence for activity besides coin dating. Except in the case of Juc-Herghelie, the numismatic evidence is entirely from the Severan period or earlier. Generally, outside of an assumed basic occupation at rural sites during the survey period, no further conclusions can be made.

Site Name	Construction	Demolition	Destruction	Hoarding
Hobita				
Hateg				
Cincis				
Deva				
Ocna Sibiului				
Slimnic				
Obreja				
Aiud				
Rosia Montana				
Soporu de Campie				
Suceagu				
Chinteni				
Archiud				
Juc-Herghelie				

Table 8. 2: Evidence for mid-third century activity at rural sites in Transylvania

9. Numismatic and Epigraphic Data from Transylvania

9.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the numismatic and epigraphic assemblages from Transylvania independent of the archaeological site data. Good contextual data should always be sought when attempting to analyse material. However, when taken in aggregate, coins and inscriptions can illuminate key themes even when good contextual data is not available. The chapter works through the general trends of the data for numismatic finds and inscriptions, both on a general regional level and for each type of find. Several key points emerge from the analysis offered. The numismatic evidence shows a cessation of coinage after Reece period XII (238-260), specifically in the reign of Trajan Decius. Unlike Southwest Germany there is no recovery in the period immediately following or after. While there is a larger period epigraphic assemblage for Transylvania than Southwest Germany, there is a severe drop in epigraphic material beginning after the reign of Philip the Arab, following the general trend of the Empire during the period. Further, the dependence on the historical record to interpret the data is also shown to be problematic, especially with reference to coin hoards, but also in the epigraphic record as well. This is most clearly seen through the influence of the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab. Transylvania has been considered as the main target of the Carpi in this campaign based on the numismatic and epigraphic evidence. However, there is no archaeological evidence for any invasion or destruction, in contrast to south of the Carpathians. Thus, it is argued that campaigns, while not occurring in Transylvania, nonetheless had an effect on the region. Concluding remarks are given on each class of data independently, but general conclusions on these assemblages together are given as they have been paramount in constructing the narrative for the region.

9.2 Numismatic trends in Transylvania

General (Găzdac 2002b; 2010; Petac 2011; Munteanu 2017) and specialist (Găzdac 1998; 1999; 2002b; 2004; Găzdac and Alföldy-Găzdac 2008; Hügel 2003, 84-124; Dudău 2006) numismatic studies exist on the coin distribution of *Dacia* as a whole. However, this thesis is the first body of work to analyse and format the regional numismatic assemblage using the methodology set out initially by Reece (1995) and furthered by Walton (2012).¹⁴¹

9.2.1 General numismatic trends in Transylvania

A total of 10,448 single coin finds were identified from the region to put together the general numismatic trends for Transylvania (see Appendix E.1). The largest number of coins, 3530,

¹⁴¹ Munteanu's (2017) study was unavailable for consultation.

came from towns, followed by 3281 military site finds, and 353 rural finds. A total of 3324 stray finds came from either antiquarian collections or chance finds not associated with a site. Like Southwest Germany, current studies have mainly looked only at site finds and generally disregarded stray finds. The exception to this trend is the work of Petac (2011), which collated a gazetteer of finds by modern find spot. Consequently, the data for this section was mainly collected from Petac's (2011, 263-336, 340-346) list. Due to the general nature of coin find recording in Transylvania, most stray finds and some site finds are only given a dating based on the emperor and may not be identified by denomination. Where possible, numismatic site monographs were used, as they contained full coin identifications.¹⁴² Assessing the rural assemblage is difficult at best, and different studies have used different parameters to assign coin finds to rural sites.¹⁴³ Therefore, coins were attributed to rural sites by matching up coin finds in Petac (2011) with locations given in Popa's (2002) gazetteer of rural sites in Transylvania. Any entry which detailed remains of a settlement beyond random finds scatter was then added to the rural assemblage.

Reece periods XII (238-260; Gordian III-Valerian and Gallienus joint reign) and XIII (260-275; Gallienus sole reign-Aurelian) are the focus of this study, but some general comments about coin loss in the region should be made before elaborating further (*fig. 9.1*; *fig. 9.2*). While Găzduc (2010, 162) was the first to identify the basic numismatic trends in Dacia, his study spanned the foundation of the province to the end of the reign of Constantine I (106-337). The current study goes further to include stray finds and a longer chronology to create a regional mean of coin loss for all Roman coins in Transylvania. It is acknowledged, however, that the secondary sources employed are not without their problems. Outside of the published numismatic site monographs for the region, the identification and publication of Roman coins has concentrated on those dating from the traditional dates of Roman occupation of ca. 106-275 (Dudău 2006; Petac 2011), or extended to the death of Constantine I in 337 (Găzduc 2002b; 2010).

¹⁴² Găzduc and Cociș (2004) for *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, Găzduc and Gudea (2006) for both the fort and town at *Moigrad-Porolissum*, Găzduc and Isac (2007) for the auxiliary forts at Gilău and Cășeu, Găzduc et al. (2009) for the entirety of *Apulum* (the legionary fortress, *municipium*, and *colonia*), Găzduc et al. (2011) for the auxiliary fort at Ilișua, Găzduc and Pripon (2012) for the auxiliary fort at Buciumi, and Pîslaru (2012) for the legionary fortress and town at *Turda-Potaissa*

¹⁴³ Hügel (2003, 91) states that he used nine sites in his study but lists fifteen. Eleven of these come from Transylvania. Meanwhile, Petac (2011, 165) states that 523 coins were identified from rural contexts for his study of the entire province but gives no list of which sites were deemed suitable.

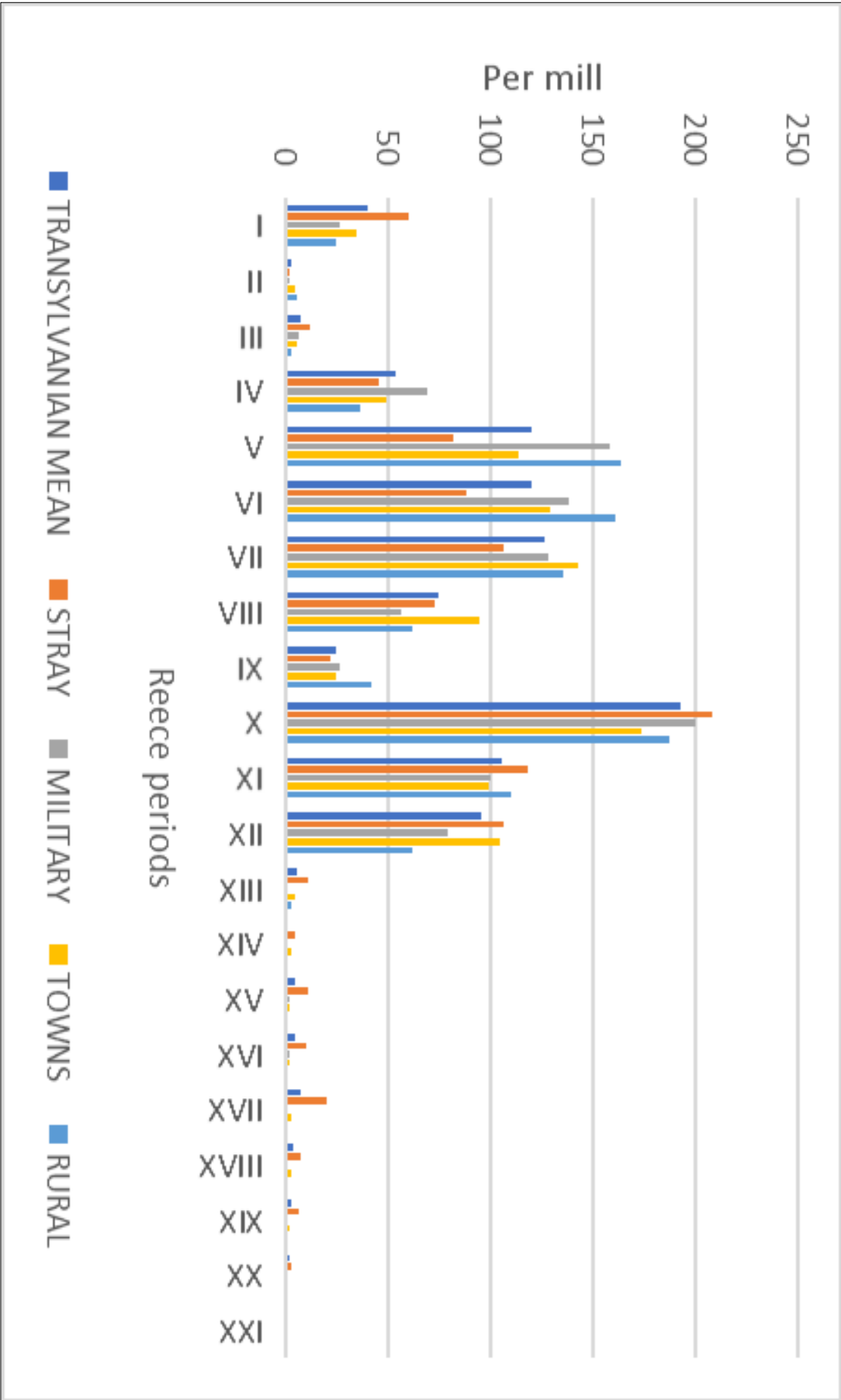


Figure 9. 1: General coin loss trends for Transylvania

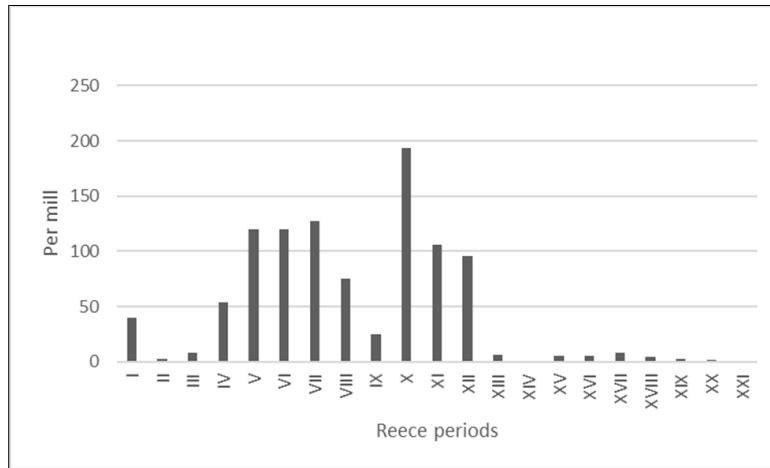


Figure 9. 2:Transylvanian mean

The general mean for the region shows a modest spike in circulation compared to later periods beginning with Reece period I (Republic-41; Republic to Augustan/early Julio-Claudian dynasty). One hundred ninety-eight of the 419 coins from period I come from stray finds, making up the majority of the category. There is another small spike in period IV coins (69-96; Flavian dynasty), in which military sites predominate. Whether this is due to the Dacian War of Domitian is questionable, as the spike in coin loss is represented at military sites founded in the second century. Circulation across the region jumps more than 50% between period IV and period V (96-117; Nerva/Trajanic), which correlates with the Dacian Wars of Trajan and the incorporation of the region into the Empire (Găzdac 2010, 197). Coin loss is stabilized throughout the periods VI-VII (117-161; Hadrian-Antoninus Pius), where the highest rate of coin loss is in rural contexts, followed by military sites, and then towns in periods V and VI. Towns begin to predominate site finds in period VII. A sharp, yet steady decline is seen in periods VIII (161-180; late Antonine dynasty) and IX (180-192; Commodus) across all find types. In both periods towns have the highest rate of coin loss, followed by rural contexts and then military sites. Period X (193-222; early Severan dynasty) then sees a spike in coin loss of over 800% from period IX. Stray finds from period X onwards represent the highest level of coin loss. After stray finds, military sites, rural contexts, and then towns follow in period X. Regional coin loss then sees a drop of 45% to period XI (22-238; late Severan dynasty). Period XII (238-260; Gordian III-Valerian/Gallienus joint reign) sees a slight drop in the regional mean, with a drop in coin loss of 21% at military sites and 45% in rural contexts, while there is a rise in towns of 5%. There is a severe drop in coinage between period XII and period XIII (260-275; Gallienus sole reign-Aurelian), where coin loss is virtually non-existent at military sites and in rural

contexts, with only a miniscule amount appearing in towns. For the remaining periods, there is very little coin loss in the region, except for a small spike in stray finds in period XVII (330-348; Constantinian II).

The high rate of coin loss from rural contexts, like Southwest Germany, may be explained by the fact that much of the data comes not from excavations, but from sites which were identified to have remains of rural settlements. Furthermore, the chance that unprovenanced coins from antiquarian collections may indeed come from sites from within the region means that the coin loss for different site types could be different if finds were better provenanced. The drop in coinage seen between period XII and period XIII has traditionally been seen as evidence for the beginning of abandonment of the region under Gallienus (Macrea 1941; 1969, 454; Macrea and Tudor 1960, 465). Though spotting an initial drop in coinage beginning with the reign of Trajan Decius in 249-251, recent scholarship has argued for a withdrawal of the region beginning under Gallienus as well (Găzdac 1998, 231; Găzdac 2010, 198). Indeed, the evidence is suggestive of an almost complete cessation of coin circulation in the region beginning in period XIII. This seems to support the notion that Roman administration had ceased in Transylvania. While this might be read as supporting the notion that Roman administration ended at this time, the data requires a more nuanced reading. The intricacies of the drop in coin circulation between periods XII and XIII will be addressed below in section 9.2.3. However, in order to get a clearer picture, general trends for each site type should be examined first.

9.2.2 General numismatic trends by site type in Transylvania

After a spike in period I, stray coin finds see a steady climb in coin loss through periods II-VII, followed by a decline in period VIII, and a sharp decline in period IX (*fig. 9.3*). Period X sees a spike followed by a drop in coin loss to period XI, which is then stabilized through period XII. The cut-off in coin loss between period XII and XIII is clearly pronounced, though there is still some level of coin loss present in stray finds until period XX.

Coin loss for military site finds follow a roughly similar trend to stray coin finds. However, a few biases in the data should be noted. Seven hundred forty out of 787 of the coins from the legionary fortresses come from Turda-*Potaissa* alone (Pislaru 2012). This is due to extensive excavation of the legionary fortress over the past four decades, whereas the fortress at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* is largely buried underneath an eighteenth-century fortress. Additionally, 1868 of the 2385 coins from auxiliary forts come from six sites. These either been published in site monographs as in the case of Moigrad-*Porolissum*, Cășeiu, Gilău, Ilișua, and Buciumi (Găzdac and Gudea 2006; Găzdac and Isac 2007; Găzdac et al. 2011; Găzdac and Pripon

2012), or a published coin list in a recent monograph, as is the case at Gherla (Protase et al. 2008, 52-71). Extramural settlements are solely represented by Gilău and Ilișua, and given that they represent such a small sample of the whole, likely give skewed results (Găzdac and Isac 2007; Găzdac et al. 2011).

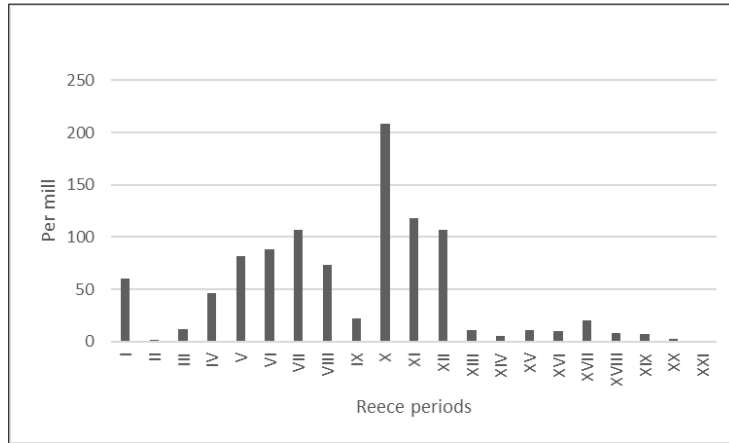


Figure 9. 3: Stray coin finds in Transylvania

There is a spike in coin loss for auxiliary forts in period V, which correlates with the establishment of the province ca. 106 after the second *Dacian War* (fig. 9.4). Although the coin loss from legionary fortresses remains stable between period V and VI, there is a drop of 22% in coin loss at auxiliary forts in period VI. In period VII, the finds from extramural settlements drop to be roughly on par with those from auxiliary forts, while the gradual climb of finds from legionary fortresses reaches its peak before declining. Periods VIII and IX see a gradual decrease in finds from all three site types, legionary fortresses predominate in both periods. The spike in period X shows an increase at legionary fortresses of 735%. Finds from auxiliary forts spike 755%, while finds from extramural settlements spike 589%.

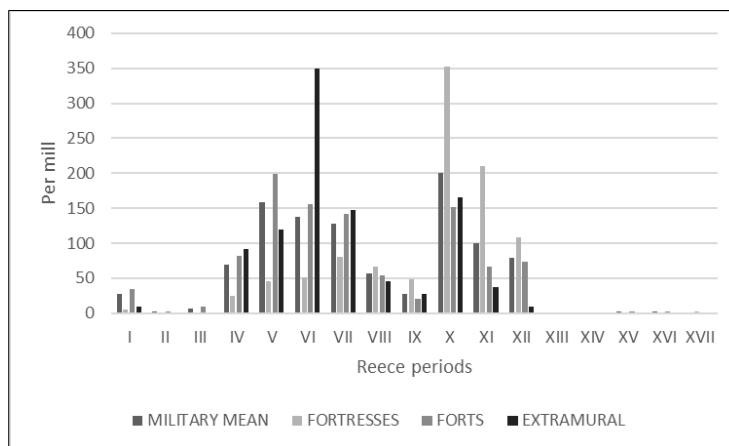


Figure 9. 4: Military coin finds in Transylvania

All three site types experience a massive, yet steady decline from periods X-XII.

Interestingly, however, Legionary fortresses display much higher rates of coin loss in periods

X and XI. Coin loss rates still predominate at legionary fortresses over auxiliary forts in period XII, but only by 36 *per mills* compared to the 202 *per mills* in period X and 143 *per mills* in period XI. This suggests that between the ascension of Gordian III in 238 and the end of Valerian and Gallienus' joint reign in 253-260, there was an attempt to stabilize coin circulation across military contexts. This might be explained by the production of bronze issues at the provincial mint of *Viminacium* from 239/240 to 255, and the appearance of *Provincia Dacia* bronze issues, presumably minted somewhere in *Dacia*, from 246-257 (Martin 1992, 13).¹⁴⁴ Period XIII sees an almost complete cessation of coinage, with each site type only generating 1 *per mill*, and therefore not registering on the histogram (*fig. 9.4*). Consequently, practical cessation of coin loss at all military sites beginning with period XIII appears to fit into the existing narrative with a sharp decline in coin supply began with the reign of Trajan Decius in 249 and continued thereafter (Găzdac 2010, 199; Dudău 2006, 91-93).

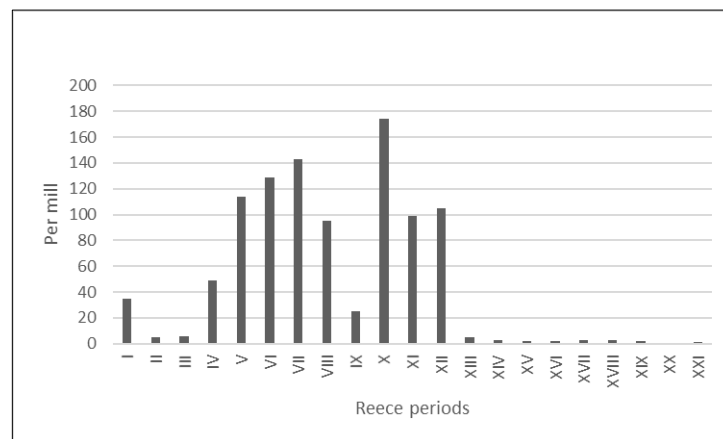


Figure 9. 5: Town coin finds in Transylvania

Towns also display a similar pattern for coin loss (*fig. 9.5*). After the initial spike in coinage in period I and drop in periods II-III, there follows a rise in period IV, and a jump of 233% to period V. The steady increase between periods V-VII is seen again, with a drop in coin loss in period VIII, followed by a severe drop in period IX. The spike in period X is followed by a drop in period XI of some 45%, with a 5% increase in period XII. Notably, transition between these periods is relatively stable in contrast to military sites, where there is a marked decline between periods XI and XII. An almost complete cessation occurs in period XIII, as seen in other find types. In contrast to military sites, coin loss continues in every period beyond period XIII except for period XX, albeit in very low quantities.

¹⁴⁴ See section 9.2.3 for further discussion of regional mint production.

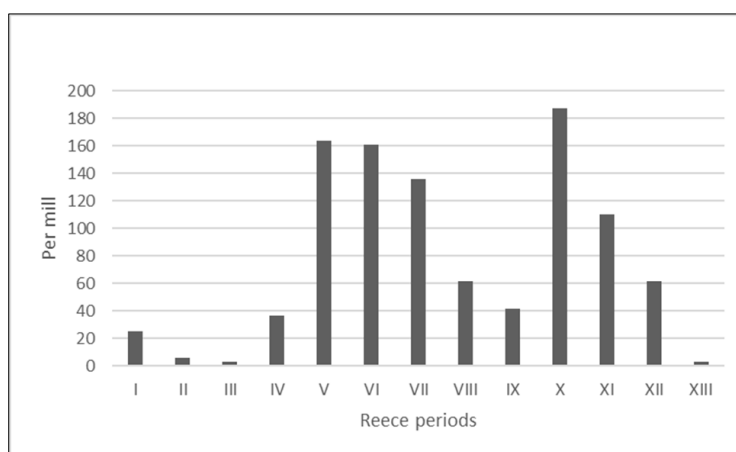


Figure 9. 6: Rural context coin finds in Transylvania

The trajectory of rural coin loss is similar to other find types, with a few differences (*fig. 9.6*). The jump in coin loss between periods IV and V is much more pronounced, at over 432%. This may be due to the overall lower number of coins from rural contexts and perhaps the absence of older issues in the influx of coins into rural contexts. Instead of an increase between periods IV-VII, there is a decline beginning in period V. The major drop in coin loss begins earlier in rural contexts between periods VII and VIII, with a limited decrease between periods VIII and IX. Following the spike in period X, there is a large, yet steady decline to period XII, followed by the severe drop into period XIII, resulting in almost complete cessation of coin loss. The steady decline between periods X and XIII is interesting in the rural context, as at a 44% drop it is notably more pronounced than across military sites. This could indeed be a more acute manifestation of the problems of coin circulation seen in military contexts beginning in period XII. If there were problems in securing coinage for the army, then this may have had a similar effect in rural contexts. However, this interpretation may be skewed by the overall low quantity of coinage from rural contexts as well as the absence of rural coinage from excavated sites.

All find types follow the same basic trend of coin loss, but it is important to note that only finds from towns show a small uptick in coin loss in period XII, while stray finds, military site finds, and rural finds all follow the decline from the high spike in the early Severan period. The almost complete cessation of coin loss between periods XII and XIII also follows the general trends established by Macrea (1941) and Găzdac (1998; 2010, 199). Due to a lack of dated material in the latest features at excavated sites in the region, these basic numismatic trends have been used to argue for a process of abandonment beginning during the reign of Gallienus, and finalized in the reign of Aurelian (Macrea 1941; 1969 465; Macrea and Tudor 1960, 465; Petolescu 1995, 125; Bărbulescu 1998, 61; Protase 2000, 402; Ardevan and

Zerbini 2007, 204-207; Petac 2011, 203). However, in order to expound on the issue further, the mid-third century assemblage for the region must first be considered at on its own.

9.2.3 Mid-third century numismatic trends in Transylvania

A total of 1066 coins were identified from the region that belonged to periods XII and XIII (Appendix E.2). The largest number of coins were stray finds with 393, followed by towns with 385. Two hundred sixty-four coins were identified from military sites, while only 24 were noted from rural contexts. Aspects of the mid-third century numismatic assemblage for *Dacia* have been addressed in other studies (Macrea 1941; Găzdac 1998; 2004; Hügel 2003, 84-124). Except for Horedt's (1982, 32-33) brief observations on the coin circulation in the Roman towns in the region, what follows is the first modern in-depth discussion of the data for Transylvania.

Though the basic observation that there was a severe drop off in coinage between periods XII and XIII was noted in the previous section, the picture can be further refined by examining the patterns of coin loss by regnal periods (*fig. 9.7*).

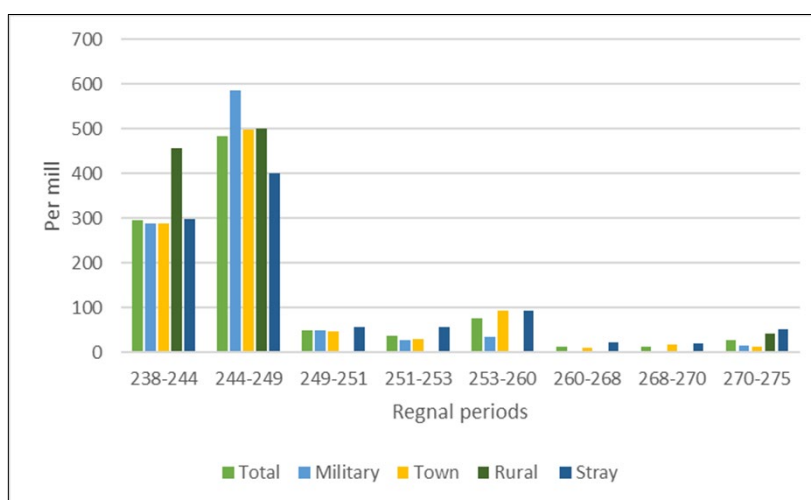


Figure 9. 7: Transylvanian mid-third century numismatic assemblage by regnal periods

The period from 238-244 under Gordian III sees a relatively level pattern of coin loss across all site types, except for rural contexts. This abnormally high spike is due to that of the 24 coins from rural contexts, eleven come from the period 238-244 and twelve come from the following period. The period 244-249 sees a large spike overall. While coin loss across all find types see an increase, this spike is seen in finds from military sites and towns, and stray finds, with rural contexts only increasing slightly. A severe drop in coin loss across all find types is seen in the periods of 249-251 and 251-253. This cut-off in coin circulation in the region has been noted as evidence that beginning during the reign of Philip the Arab, there was difficulty in supplying coinage to the region (Găzdac 2010, 199; Dudău 2006, 91-93).

Stray finds predominate over military sites and towns, but only slightly. In the period of 253-260 there is a substantial recovery in coin loss with towns and stray finds, though military sites stay at about the same rate. The periods 260-268, 268-270, and 270-275 display a near total cessation in coin loss in the region, with military sites and rural contexts have no finds at all from 260-270. Towns do have evidence of coin loss in all three periods, but numismatic finds for these periods are generally stray finds. In contrast, Găzdac (1998, 229-234; 1999) initially stated that there was a sizable influx of coinage during the sole reign of Gallienus. Hügel (2003, 89) contested this, claiming that a false positive was due to the placement of all issues of Gallienus in the period of 260-268 regardless of date. Later work by Găzdac (2010, 199-200; Alföldy-Găzdac and Găzdac 2004; 2005) attempted to remedy this by combining the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus and the sole reign of Gallienus into one period from 253-268. However, this masks the problem rather than confronting it.¹⁴⁵

At military sites, coin loss predominates at legionary fortresses in all periods, except from 244-249 and 270-275 (*fig. 9.8*). Though there is evidence for coin loss in the period 270-275, it is barely enough to register on the histogram, showing a nominal presence compared to the low levels seen from 249-260. Găzdac (2002a, 738) states that from the period of 253-268, if the auxiliary forts in the region were if not entirely abandoned, at least there was extreme difficulty in obtaining coins for payment. In fact, the low rate of coinage at military sites in Transylvania appears to begin in 249-251 during the reign of Trajan Decius, reaching a low point in 251-253 under Trebonianus Gallus, before slightly recovering in 253-260, during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus. This more nuanced picture of the regional numismatic assemblage would imply that while levels were low, the complete cessation in coinage truly began with the sole reign of Gallienus, at least in Transylvania. Unfortunately, the overall lack of stratigraphic excavation and ability to date most finds with accuracy means important questions are left unanswered. Whether or not this drop in coin circulation indicates a payment in kind scenario for the military has not been raised in previous scholarship on the coinage. However, it must remain an open question.

¹⁴⁵ Upon comparison of Găzdac's (1999, 39-49) tables with later coin lists of Moigrad-*Porolissum* (Găzdac and Gudea 2006), *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (Găzdac and Cociș 2004), the fortress, *municipium*, and *colonia* at *Apulum* (Găzdac et al. 2009), and the fortress and *colonia* at *Turda-Potaissa* (Pislaru 2012), Hügel's (2003, 89) observations were confirmed.

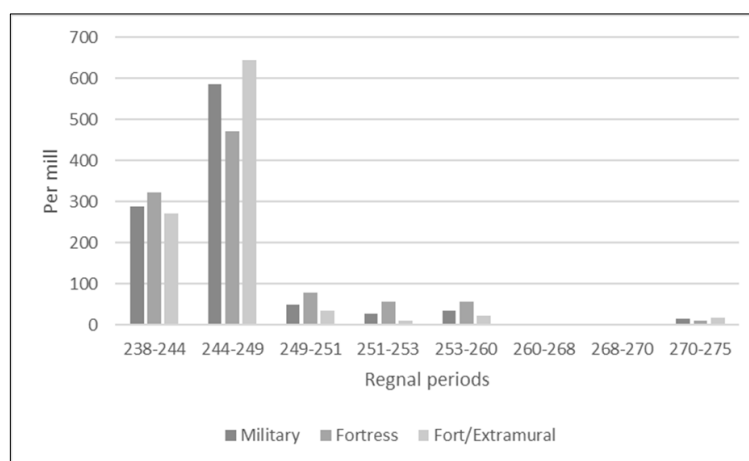


Figure 9. 8: Transylvanian mid-third century military numismatic assemblage by regnal periods

Recent studies have claimed that the influx of coinage during the period of 244-249 was due to the appearance of *Provincia Dacia* coinage, produced in order to supply the army during and after the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab. The argument is that these coins were used to offset a lack of centrally minted coinage making its way into the region (Callu 1969, 18-19; Macrea 1978, 172; Alföldy-Găzdac and Găzdac 2004, 249-252; 2005; Găzdac and Alföldy-Găzdac 2008, 151-171; Ardevan and Zerbini 2007, 195). These coins were minted from 246-256.¹⁴⁶ The reverse of the coins bear the legend *Provincia Dacia*, with a female personification of the province in the field. The figure is flanked by the legionary symbols of the *XIII Gemina* and the *V Macedonica*; an eagle with a wreath in its beak and a lion. The figure may also hold two standards with ‘V’ and ‘XIII’ on them for the legions, a *falx*, or an olive branch and a standard inscribed ‘DF’ (*Dacia Felix*). In the exergue is the legend AN(NUS) followed by the year I-X (Alföldy-Găzdac and Găzdac 2005, 651). Thus, though following standard weights and sizes of normal bronze coinage, their appearance makes them distinct and easier to identify.

There has been discussion over where these coins were minted, whether at *Viminacium*, *Apulum*, or *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*. However, based on the principle that the *koina* in the Greek East were in charge of minting local bronze issues, Kos (1992a) and Ardevan (1996) came to the conclusion that the minting of *Provincia Dacia* issues likely occurred at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*. This was due to the *concilium trium Daciarum* being located there, presumably until the end of minting in 257 (Ardevan 1998, 335-336).¹⁴⁷ Although the evidence for this is circumstantial, there is no reason to doubt the conclusion.¹⁴⁸ Minting of

¹⁴⁶ The coins are dated AN(NUS) I-X (246/247-255/256), based on a so-called ‘local era’.

¹⁴⁷ The latest epigraphic evidence for the *concilium* dates from 248 under Philip the Arab (IDR III/2, 81). See section 9.4.2 for discussion of the inscription.

¹⁴⁸ Modern coin lists, however, vacillate between listing the mint as *Dacia*, *Apulum*, and *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* without discussion as to why.

bronze coinage began earlier at *Viminacium*, either in Autumn 239 or Spring 240, during which antoniniani were also minted from 246/248-257 (Kos 1992a, 213).¹⁴⁹

On observation of the period assemblage, a little more than a third of the overall coin finds come from either the *Viminacium* or *Provincia Dacia* mints. In all cases, *Provincia Dacia* issues vastly outnumber *Viminacium* issues. These issues are least represented amongst stray finds, but at slightly over 40% of the overall assemblage for towns and rural contexts (fig. 9.9). However, within military contexts, the amount of coinage from these regional mints is almost at parity with coinage from other parts of the Empire. This appears to lead credence to the hypothesis that the regional mints were indeed established for the military.

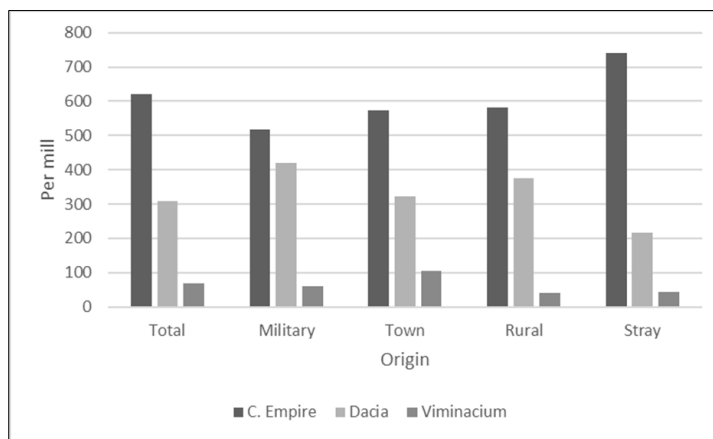


Figure 9. 9: Transylvanian mid-third century numismatic assemblage by origin

On closer examination of the military assemblage, at auxiliary forts the amount of *Provincia Dacia* coinage, along with the issues from *Viminacium*, is about equal with coin finds from elsewhere (fig. 9.10). While the combination of finds from both mints still make up more than 40% of the period assemblage from legionary fortresses, the totals are more akin to the towns. To take this further, despite the legionary iconography on the reverse of the coins, it seems that *Provincia Dacia* issues circulated more amongst the soldiers in the auxiliary forts rather than fortresses. Though beyond the scope of the thesis, this raises the possibility that smaller installations could have also been occupied by detachments of legions rather than exclusively by the auxiliaries.

The predominance of bronze coinage over silver coinage in all categories except stray finds would seem to highlight the unique situation in the region at a time when bronze coins all but

¹⁴⁹ Dating the beginning of the *Viminacium* mint in either 239 or 240 has been controversial, due to chronologies that cannot fit either date. Similar to the *Provincia Dacia* issues, *Viminacium* coins are dated AN(NUS) I-XV to a 'local era'. For extended discussion see (Kos 1992a, 213; 1992b). On the same logic for selection of *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* for the *Provincia Dacia* mint, Kos (1992a) argues that the *concilium provinciae* for *Moesia Superior* was based at *Viminacium*.

disappeared in other parts of the Empire (*fig. 9.11*). Furthermore, though the higher prevalence of *Provincia Dacia* issues is seen at auxiliary forts, the ratio of silver to gold coinage between auxiliary forts and legionary fortresses is roughly the same (*fig. 9.12*). However, further excavation of the fortress at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* may change the narrative.

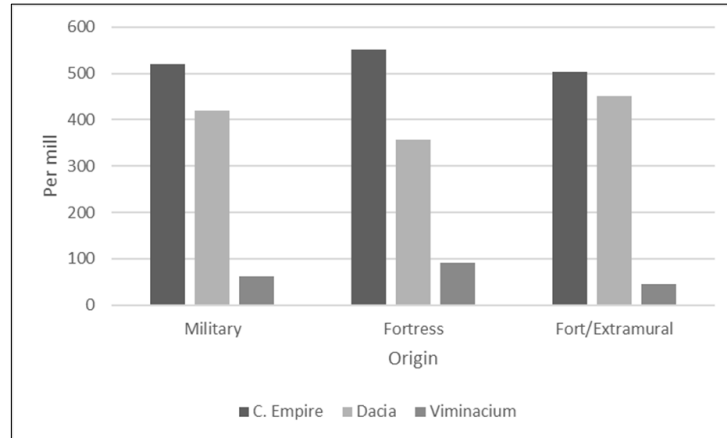


Figure 9. 10: Transylvanian mid-third century military numismatic assemblage by origin

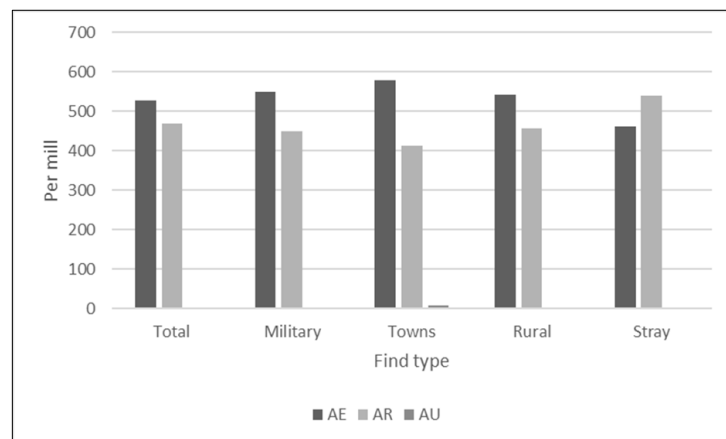


Figure 9. 11: Transylvanian mid-third century numismatic assemblage by base metal

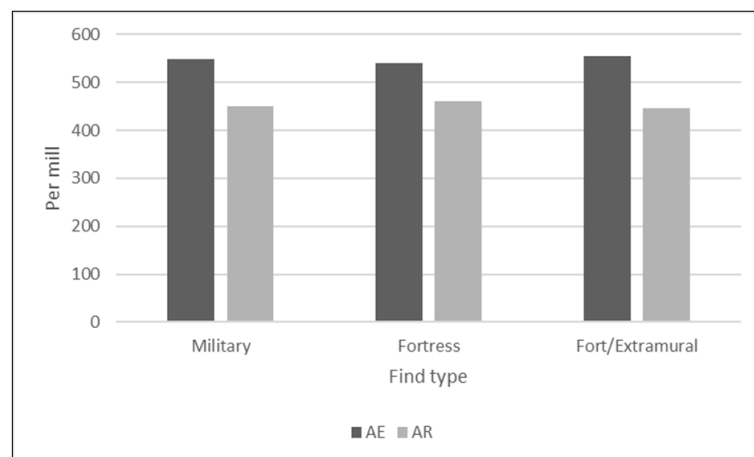


Figure 9. 12: Transylvanian mid-third century military numismatic assemblage by base metal

It must be reiterated that there is still no archaeological evidence to confirm that the Carpic Wars physically reached Transylvania. The widespread destruction noted south of the Carpathians could have disrupted the supply of central coinage to the region. Beyond the scope of the current survey, further studies of the chronology and concentration of imported goods into Transylvania could help in highlighting what effects, if any, that the Carpic Wars had on the region. Moreover, though *Provincia Dacia* issues lasted until 255/256, there is a spike in overall finds during the reign of Philip the Arab that drops beginning with Trajan Decius, which has been argued to be further proof that these issues were effectively a temporary fix to financial problems in the region (Alföldy-Găzdac and Găzdac 2005, 651; Găzdac 2004, 75; 2010, 157). Notably, circulation of both *Provincia Dacia* and *Viminacium* issues, as well as coins from other mints does recover in sub-Carpathian *Dacia* (Alföldy-Găzdac and Găzdac 2004, 251). If *Provincia Dacia* issues were being minted in Transylvania, which given the administrative centres at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* and *Alba Iulia-Apululum* is entirely feasible, the fact that they were destined for the sub-Carpathian region of *Dacia* after Philip the Arab is striking. This could suggest at the very least that these coins were perhaps minted in more than one location.

9.2.4 Numismatic trends conclusions

Signs do indeed point to some sort of financial crisis possibly beginning under the reign of Trajan Decius. This appears to have particularly affected the military. Whatever the cause of the crisis it may have indeed begun earlier as evidenced by the production of *Provincia Dacia* coinage under Philip the Arab in 246. Although the highest levels of coin loss for the period occur during the period of 244-249, this is largely bolstered by the appearance of these regional issues. The Carpic Wars may have led to issues with central coin supply and the beginning of regional minting, but it is perhaps more likely that these patterns are due to destabilization south of the Carpathians which may have disrupted trade and supply networks. There is no evidence that an attack on Transylvania was the root cause.

Indeed, the reign of Philip the Arab was the last period where there was any significant amount of coin circulation in the region. A slight recovery in towns is seen during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus, but military finds stay at very low levels, eventually disappearing altogether from the sole reign of Gallienus to the ascension of Aurelian in 270. Coins continue to penetrate the region into Late Antiquity, but these are mainly known from stray finds. Ultimately, the numismatic evidence for the period would appear to verify previous claims that at least from a fiscal perspective, the region was effectively cut off from the rest of the Empire during the sole reign of Gallienus. Rudimentary identification of much

of the assemblage, along with the focus on recording coins from the Principate over later finds, creates serious problems in interpretation of the regional numismatic assemblage. The absence of evidence is not always the evidence of absence, but the numismatic assemblage as it currently stands would indicate that at least in fiduciary terms, the administration was not able to supply coinage to the region beginning with the sole reign of Gallienus. Though with the ascension of Aurelian, coinage would increase, it appears that it was too late to consider maintaining the region.

9.3 Mid-third century coin hoards from Transylvania

Coin hoards associated with sites have already been covered for the region in sections 7.6 and 8.6, so this section will briefly cover the overall assemblage and the methodological issues in its interpretation (*fig. 9.13*). There is a total of 28 different numismatic hoards in the region from the survey period, coming from a total of 23 locations (*Appendix E.3; tab. 9.1*). Eleven of the hoards were found at sites associated with the study. Alba Iulia-*Apulum* contained the largest number of hoards with five, followed by the *municipium* at Moigrad-*Porolissum* with two. In contrast to Southwest Germany, coin hoards have been one of the main pieces of data that have been used to narrate events in the final period of Roman occupation in Transylvania. The level of data is very poor, with only four hoards coming from excavation. Only six of the 28 hoards were recorded as fully recovered and identified. Only two hoards both came from excavation and were fully recovered and identified. These are the ‘temple hoards’ from the *municipium* at Moigrad-*Porolissum*; *Porolissum* I (Găzdac and Gudea 2006, 114-115; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 75) and *Porolissum* II (Găzdac and Gudea 2006, 115-117; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 81). That these two hoards from Moigrad-*Porolissum* were both fully recovered and identified is likely due to their discovery during modern excavation in 1996 and 1998, respectively.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ See section 8.6.1 for discussion.

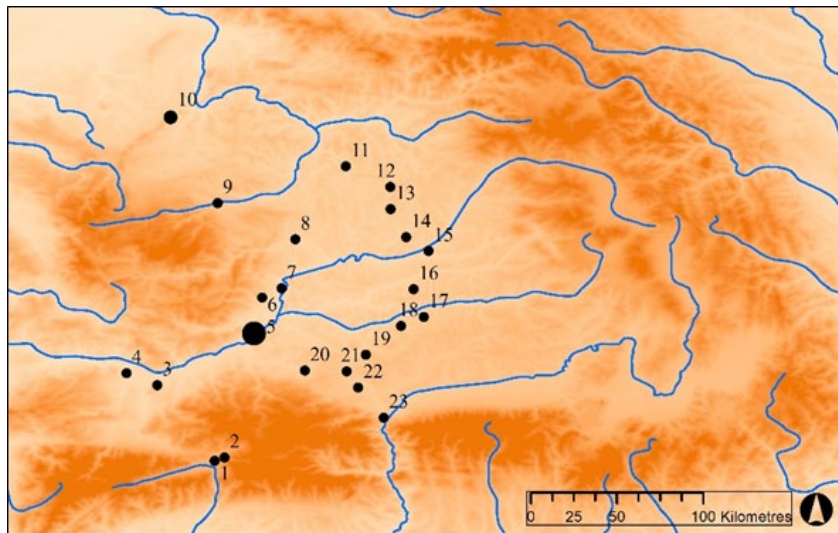


Figure 9. 13: Mid-third century coin hoards in Transylvania.

1. Petroșani 2. Jieț-Pop 3. Jeledinți 4. Deva 5. Alba Iulia-*Apulum* (NB: five hoards) 6. Geomal-Stremț 7. Aiud 8. Turda-*Potaissa* 9. Gliău 10. Moigrad-*Porolissum* (NB: two hoards) 11. Țaga 12. Vișuia 13. Sângeorgiu de Câmpie 14. Band 15. Cristești 16. Hărănglab 17. Ațel 18. Ighișu Nou 19. Ruși 20. Apoldu de Jos 21. Ocna Sibiului 22. Turnișor 23. Boița

9.3.1 Interpretation of Transylvanian hoards

Hoards in the region closing under Gordian III and Philip the Arab have long been used as justification that the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab in 245 and 246-248 impacted the region (Loriot 1976; Petolescu 1995, 120; Suciú 2000, 138; Găzdac 2010, 140-141; 2012, 175).¹⁵¹ Indeed, eighteen of the 28 hoards fall into *terminus ante quem* if this is taken at face value (*tab 9.1*). However, only four of the hoards, Geomal-Stremț (Suciú 2000, nr. 60; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 13), Deva (Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 10), Alba Iulia V (Suciú 2000, nr.6; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 29), and Vișuia (Suciú 2000, nr. 131; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 67) were fully recovered and identified, and thus have secure closing dates. Even so, none of these were found in excavation, and the contexts of their discoveries were not clearly documented. Consequently, it is not possible to state whether or not any of the hoards were associated with any destruction deposits or burning layers.

South of the Carpathians, there is a larger concentration of hoards closing under Gordian III (fifteen) and Philip the Arab (23), along with a series of destruction layers broadly dated to the reign of Philip the Arab. Hoards found in the forts at Săpăta de Jos, Bumbești-Jiu, and *Pons Aluti* closing under Philip the Arab were all found in contexts sealed by burning layers (Găzdac 2012, 175). These have been argued to be indicators of the Carpic Wars and the

¹⁵¹ Though Găzdac (2010, 140) admits that it is difficult to distinguish between which hoards were buried due to Carpic invasion and those deposited for other reasons, there is still a tendency to tie deposition to historic events.

coinciding destruction of the *limes transalutanus*, either during this engagement or following Gothic incursions under Trajan Decius (Mitrea 1968, 214; Preda 1968, 192-194; Tudor 1978, 89; Bogdan-Cătănicu 1981, 53; Ardevan and Zerbini 2007, 194). Assessing the veracity of these claims is beyond the scope of this study, but there is more tangible evidence for military engagement and destruction south of the Carpathians than within Transylvania. Furthermore, the Carpic Wars are solely documented in a passage from Zosimus (I, 20, 2-3), which claims that Philip campaigned against the Carpi who were raiding ‘around the Danube’. There is no explicit reference to the province of *Dacia*, let alone to Transylvania. The lack of secure identification and context for the Transylvanian hoards, no archaeological evidence of destruction within Transylvania, and the vagueness of the passage from Zosimus demonstrate why this interpretation of hoards under Gordian III and Philip the Arab is problematic. Thus, claims (Găzdac 2012, 175) that these hoards are evidence for Transylvania being the central target of the Carpi cannot be validated by the evidence at hand.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Găzdac (2010, 142) again shows caution in admitting at least four of the hoards from south of the Carpathians cannot be dated with accuracy, but later (Găzdac 2012, 175) gives no indication of this admission.

Hoard Name	Closing Date	Fully Recovered/Identified	Found in Excavation	Contents as known
Hoards closing with Gordian III				
Atel	238	NO	NO	376 AR
Boita	238	NO	NO	214 COINS
Jeledinti	238	NO	NO	58 COINS
Ocna Sibiului	238	NO	NO	381 D
Taga	238	NO	NO	1001 D, 12 AN
Geomal-Stremt	242	YES	NO	215 D, 1 AN
Turda I	242	NO	NO	106 D, 105 AN, ?
Cristesti	243	NO	NO	108 D, 10 AN, 32 AR
Deva	243	YES	NO	18 D
Hoards closing with Philip the Arab				
Alba Iulia V	244	YES	NO	109 D, 21 AN
Band	244	NO	NO	2 D, 18 AN, ?
Gilau	244	NO	NO	1170 D
Haranglab	244	NO	NO	51 D, 20 AN, ?
Jiet-Pop	244	NO	NO	50 D, 25 AN, ca. 25?
Petrosani	244	NO	NO	2500 CO?
Rusi	244	NO	NO	52 D, 86 AN, ?
Turnisor	244	NO	NO	?
Visuia	247	YES	NO	619 D, 167 AN, 11 AR
Hoards closing with Trajan Decius				
Ighisu Nou-Medias	249	NO	NO	ca. 156 AN
Porolissum I	249	YES	YES	11 D, 10 AN
Hoards closing with Trebonianus Gallus				
Apoldu de Jos	251	NO	NO	189 D, 5 AN, 11 AR
Porolissum II	251	YES	YES	6 D, 35 AN
Sangeorgiu de Campie	251	NO	NO	?
Hoards closing with Valerian/Gallienus joint reign				
Aiud	253	NO	NO	ca. 300
Hoards closing with Gallienus sole reign				
Alba Iulia II	260	NO	YES	38 D, 251 AN
Alba Iulia IV	260	NO	NO	212 D, 997 AN, 4 AR
Alba Iulia VII	260	NO	NO	56 D, 813 AN, 1 QU, 2 AR
Hoards closing with Aurelian				
Alba Iulia III	270	NO	YES	93 D, 139 AN

Table 9. 1: Coin hoards by closing dates in Transylvania

The deposition of hoards dating from the reigns of Trajan Decius and Trebonianus Gallus have also been ascribed to a Gothic incursion into *Moesia Inferior* under Trajan Decius, based on hoarding patterns in the Balkans identified by Gerov (1977; Găzdac 2010, 142-142).¹⁵³ However, of the five examples from Transylvania, only *Porolissum* I and II were completely recovered and identified. Furthermore, these hoards were found interpreted in the context of a votive offering as they were found near the main pediment in the temple of *Jupiter Dolichenus* in the *municipium* of Moigrad-*Porolissum* (Gudea and Tamba 2001, 35-37; Găzdac and Gudea 2006, 114-117). Given their findspot in the temple and discovery during excavation, this interpretation fits the evidence. The remaining three hoards from Ighişu Nou-

¹⁵³ Though Găzdac (2010, 142-143) initially argued that the deposition of all Dacian examples was due to this Gothic engagement, he (Găzdac 2012, 176) later takes a more cautious approach, admitting that deposition may have occurred later.

Medias (Suciu 2000, nr. 79; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 71), Apoldu de Jos (Suciu 2000, nr. 11; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 78), and Sângeorgiu de Câmpie (Suciu 2000, nr. 109; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 84) were not fully recovered and recorded. Their closing dates could extend later. The only potential evidence of this incursion in Transylvania is an inscription from 250, found in the vicinity of Alba Iulia that refers to Trajan Decius as ‘*restitutori Daciae*’ (CIL III 1176=ILS 514=IDR III/5, 431). However, no further archaeological evidence that would correlate with this campaign is known from the region. Therefore, the long distance from *Moesia Inferior*, lack of clarity over the evidence, and the absence of destruction layers in Transylvania dated to the period also makes this interpretation doubtful.

All hoards from the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus to Aurelian come from the *municipium* at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* or nearby at Aiud. Speculation has risen that there was some sort of localized crisis that affected the *municipium* at Alba Iulia and the *colonia* at Partoş (Găzdac 2010, 144). Various reasons for their deposition have been given, including uncertainty caused by the abandonment of the region (Winkler 1971, 368), to barbarian attacks (Pavel 1976, 78-80), to proof that the staff of the provincial governor was still in place under Aurelian (Diaconescu 2004, 135). However, interpretation of these hoards is problematic. There has been controversy surrounding Alba Iulia II and III since their discovery in excavation at the beginning of the twentieth century; no concise documentation was given and they were lost during the First World War (Winkler 1971; Suciu 2000, 147; Găzdac et al. 2009, 6-9).¹⁵⁴ The remaining examples, Aiud (Suciu 2000, nr. 1; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 88) and Alba Iulia IV (Suciu 2000, nr. 5; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 94) and VII (Ardevan et al. 2003; Depeyrot and Moisil 2008, nr. 95) were not fully recovered and/or identified and have little context for deposition. These hoards are indicators for activity in the region through the sole reign of Gallienus and into the reign of Aurelian, but not much else.

9.3.2 Transylvanian hoards conclusions

Like Southwest Germany, fear, violence, and warfare have been the main explanations offered for the deposition of hoards in Transylvania. This would be expected of older studies (Winkler 1971; Lorient 1976; Pavel 1976), but it is notable that modern studies have yet to adopt more nuanced interpretation of the material (Suciu 2000, 148; Găzdac 2010, 137-145; 2012). The exhaustive work of Depeyrot and Moisil (2008) collected and recorded every coin from all Romanian hoards dating from Gordian III to Aurelian, but the work serves as purely

¹⁵⁴ For further discussion of the issues with Alba Iulia II and III see section 8.6.1.

a catalogue without discussion. It has been over three decades since the first major call in the academic community to consider that deposition may have occurred for a myriad of reasons (Reece 1988), but little consideration of other interpretations has been offered in this area. The absence of nuanced discussion of the hoards could be forgiven due to the poor state of recording and recovery of most of the examples from the region. However, there is little acknowledgement that this factor could impede interpretation. Consequently, attributing deposition to invasions and raiding for which there is no archaeological evidence in the region is discredited when provenance and identification of the entire assemblage is taken into account.

9.4 Mid-third century inscriptions in Transylvania

There is a total of 70 inscriptions dating to the survey period from Transylvania (Appendix F). This number includes thirteen inscriptions dating from the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235-238). Following a brief overview of the entire assemblage in the region, the mid-third century examples will then be examined and placed within their general context.

9.4.1 General epigraphic trends in Transylvania

A total of 1805 inscriptions were identified from the Roman period. The majority, 1410, were only dated as ‘general Roman’ (*fig. 9.14*). Of these, votive inscriptions made up the largest category at 764, with 591 coming from civilian contexts and 173 coming from military contexts, followed by 554 funerary inscriptions, with 437 from civilian contexts and 117 from military contexts. In contrast, there were only 66 dedicatory inscriptions, with fifteen from military contexts and 51 from civilian contexts, and 25 building inscriptions, with four from military contexts and 21 from civilian contexts. There was only one milestone from the ‘general Roman’ category. The low number of dedicatory, building inscriptions, and milestones is due to the inclusion of the reigning emperor in the text of the inscription.

Three hundred ninety-four inscriptions were able to be dated more specifically (*fig. 9.15*). Eighty-three inscriptions were generally dated to the second or third century, while 45 were dated to the Trajanic-Hadrianic period (96-138), 74 to the Antonine period (138-192), 122 to the Severan period (192-235), and 70 to the mid-third century (235/8-275). Some of the 35 inscriptions dated generally to the third century are likely mid-third century examples but, were missing critical dating information. The regional epigraphic assemblage follows the general trends for the epigraphic habit of the Western Empire during the Principate first noted by Mrozek (1973) and further expounded upon by MacMullen (1982), showing an increase from the Trajanic/Hadrianic period through to the Severan period, where it reaches its apex, followed by a general decline into the mid-third century.

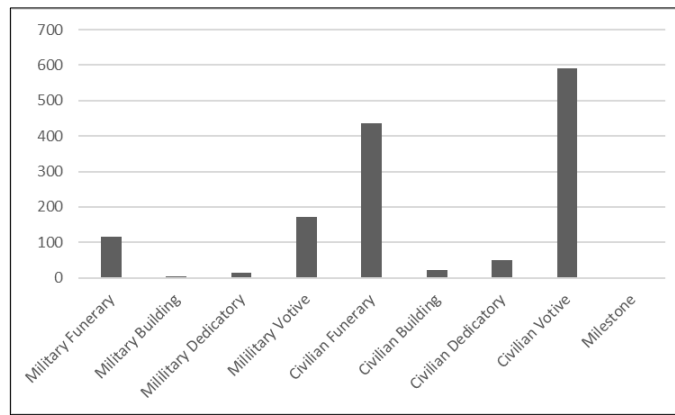


Figure 9. 14: Inscriptions dated as 'general Roman' from Transylvania.

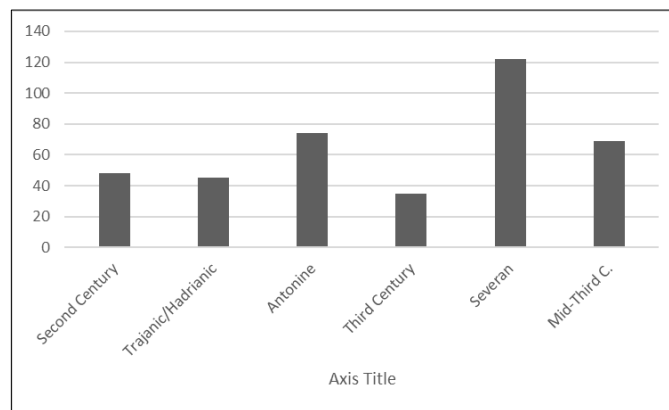


Figure 9. 15: Total number of dated inscriptions

All of the 83 inscriptions dated to the second or third centuries came from military contexts (*fig. 9.16*). The majority, 75, were votive inscriptions, while seven were dedicatory inscriptions, with a single building inscription. Like Southwest Germany, the number of second century inscriptions predominated over third century examples.

Out of the 312 inscriptions datable to a dynastic period, 212 came from military contexts (*fig. 9.17*). The greatest number of examples, 126, were votive inscriptions. In general, the Severan period was the high point for all categories of inscriptions from military contexts. There is a steady increase in votive inscriptions to the Severan period, which drops off in the mid-third century. The only funerary inscriptions are from the Severan period and the mid-third century and there are no known building inscriptions dated to the mid-third century. Building and dedicatory inscriptions see a drop from the Trajanic/Hadrianic period to the Antonine period, followed by a sharp increase in the Severan period, after which they fall off in the mid-third century. Votive inscriptions see a steady increase over the first three dynastic periods before dropping off in the mid-third century as well.

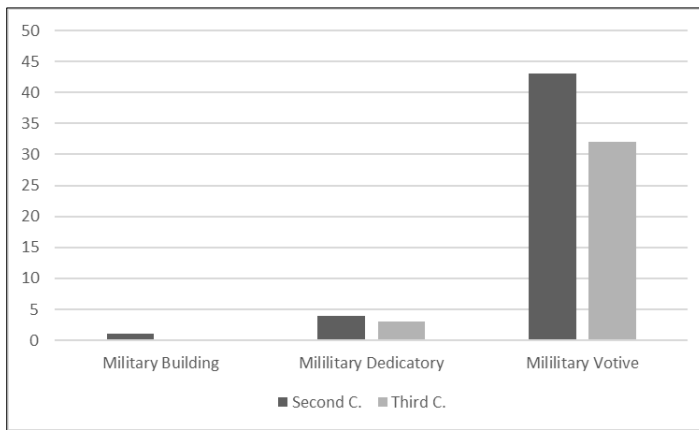


Figure 9. 16: Military inscriptions dated by century

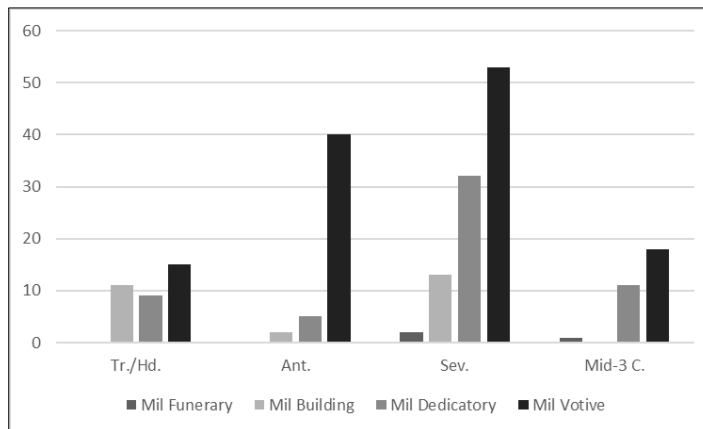


Figure 9. 17: Military inscriptions dated by dynastic period

One hundred inscriptions dated to a dynastic period were identified in a civilian context. The highest number is dedicatory inscriptions, with 51, followed by nineteen building inscriptions, and eighteen votive inscriptions (*fig. 9.18*). In addition, there are six funerary inscriptions and milestones each. Funerary, votive, and dedicatory inscriptions all follow a general trend of increasing from the Tranjanic/Hadrianic period through to the Severan period. Although no building inscriptions from civilian contexts are known in the mid-third century, the period has the highest number of dedicatory inscriptions. The only dated votive inscriptions come from the mid-third century, but this abnormal distribution is certainly due to the 591 votive inscriptions from civil contexts in the ‘general Roman’ category. The mid-third century also contains the largest number of milestones with three examples, but this amount is too small to comment on further.

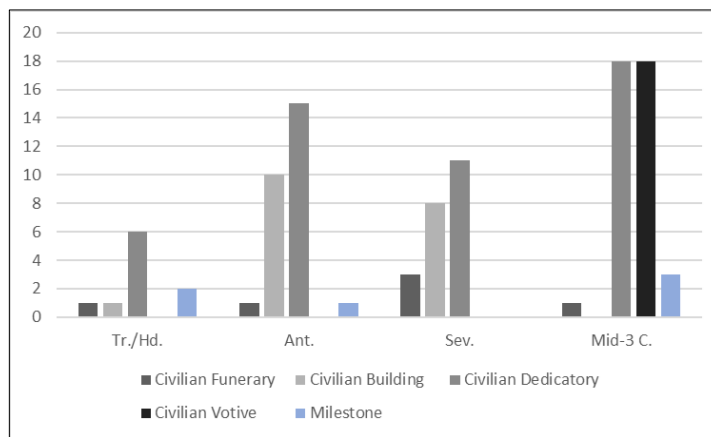


Figure 9. 18: Civilian inscriptions dated by dynastic period

Overall, the regional assemblage follows a similar trend to Southwest Germany, with an overall steady rise in the quantity of inscriptions through the second century, which peaks in the Severan period and then declines into the mid-third century. The decline is not as dramatic, but that is likely due to the very large quantity, some 78%, of the regional assemblage that could not be accurately dated though with a few differences. This creates some bias in the interpretation of the dated inscriptions, especially in civilian contexts, where the mid-third century is abnormally high with regard to dedicatory and votive inscriptions. Examples with military contexts follow a more general pattern that would be expected, which is likely due to the presence of more diagnostic information listed in these inscriptions.

9.4.2 Mid-third century epigraphic trends in Transylvania

Seventeen sites produced a total of 70 inscriptions dated to the survey period in Transylvania (fig. 9.19). The most represented group is civil dedicatory inscriptions with nineteen, followed by civil votive and military votive with eighteen examples each. In contrast to Southwest Germany, inscriptions are distributed across a smaller number of sites, with all but six sites having more than one inscription. Inscriptions are concentrated in the western half of the region and tend to come from large towns. In the case of Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, Turda-*Potaissa*, and Moigrad-*Porolissum*, their associated military installations are included as well. This complicates provenance, especially in the case of *Apulum*, where *municipium* and the legionary fortress at Alba Iulia and the *colonia* at Partoș are in immediate vicinity of one another. The most notable example is an inscription dated 250 mentioning a *colonia nova Apulensis* (CIL III 1176=ILD 514=IDR III/5, 431). As this was an antiquarian find, debate ensued whether the text referred to the *colonia* at Partoș-*Apulum*, or promotion of the *municipium* at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* under Trajan Decius (Aldea and Popa 1972, 210-211). Since no other evidence for the promotion of the *municipium* is known, modern scholarship has concluded that the text indeed referred to Partoș (Diaconescu and Piso 1993, 67; Ota

2012, 155). There is no reason to doubt this interpretation, but it nonetheless flags the difficulty in assigning inscriptions to a particular location. Furthermore, at least three, but potentially up to five inscriptions dated from the reign of Philip the Arab to Trajan Decius appear to have been spoliated from the *municipium* at Moigrad-*Porolissum* and imbedded in the wall of the southern tower of the *porta decumana* of the fort (AE 1944, 52-56=ILD 668, 670-672).¹⁵⁵ Though these examples were all found in excavation, the findspots highlight the potential for movement and reuse of the inscriptions in Antiquity. Inferences on the period assemblage can still be made, however.

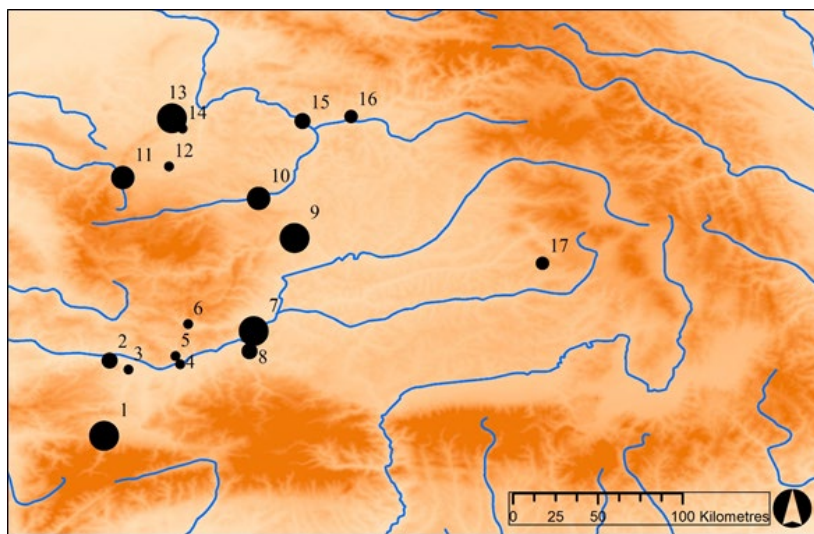


Figure 9. 19: Frequency of mid-third century inscriptions in Transylvania

1. *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (NB: Fifteen inscriptions) 2. Vețel (NB: Three inscriptions) 3. Deva 4. Cigmău 5. Geoagiu-Băi 6. Zlatna 7. Alba Iulia-*Apulum* (NB: Eleven inscriptions) 8. Partoș-*Apulum* (NB: Three inscriptions) 9. Turda-*Potaissa* (NB: Seven inscriptions) 10. Cluj-Napoca (NB: Five inscriptions) 11. Bologa (NB: Five inscriptions) 12. Almașu 13. Moigrad-*Porolissum* (NB: Seven inscriptions) 14. Romita 15. Cășeu (NB: Three inscriptions) 16. Ilișua (NB: Two inscriptions) 17. Inlăceni (NB: Two inscriptions)

The sites with the highest number of inscriptions are *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* with fifteen, Alba Iulia-*Apulum* with eleven, Turda-*Potaissa* and Moigrad-*Porolissum* with seven each, and Bologa and Cluj-Napoca with five each. The inscriptions from *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* include one funerary inscription, nine votive inscriptions, and five dedicatory inscriptions.¹⁵⁶ The latest inscription is a dedicatory inscription to Valerian and Gallienus made on behalf of the town dated 255-258 (CIL III 7971=ILS 554=IDR III/2, 89). The latest

¹⁵⁵ See section 7.2.1 for further discussion.

¹⁵⁶ Funerary: under Gordian III, CIL III 7973=IDR III/2, 461; Votive: under Maximinus Thrax (235-238) CIL III 74=AE 1971, 376=IDR III/2, 191; AE 1982, 828=ILD 281; AE 1983, 833=SEG 33, 589=ILD 257; CIL III 422=IDR III/2, 206; CIL III 1423=IDR III/2, 244; (237)CIL III 1423=AE 2004, 1211=AE 2005, 1137=AE 2006, 1102=IDR III/2, 249; under Gordian III (238-244) CIL III 1433=ILS 7129=IDR III/2, 266; CIL III 1454=ILS 7128=IDR III/2, 80; under Trebonianus Gallus (251-253) AE 1983, 841=ILD 264; Dedicatory: under Maximinus Thrax (236-238) CIL III 1456=ILD 1371=AE 1993, 1320=IDR III/2, 89; under Philip the Arab (244-249) IDR III/2, 83; CIL III 1464=ILS 1370=AE 1980, 758=IDR III/2, 100; (248) IDR III/2, 81; under Valerian/Gallienus (255-258) CIL III 7971=ILS 554=IDR III/2, 82.

known financial procurator for *Dacia*, Marcus Aurelius Marcus, is also attested via a votive altar dedicated to *Eponae Augustae* dated 251-253 (AE 1983, 841=ILD 264; Piso 1983, 249). The names of the emperors Trebonianus Gallus and Volusian were subject to *damnatio memoriae* on the altar (Piso 1983, 249).

The most notable inscription from the period at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* is a dedication to Philip the Arab in 248 by the *concilium trium Daciarum* (IDR III/2, 81). This inscription is the latest mention of the governing body of the province (Ardevan 1998, 335-336). Piso (1974) argued that this was proof of the emperor's visit to the provincial capital after the successful completion of the Carpic Wars in 247 but must have taken place before the *iubilaeum* for the 1000th anniversary of the founding of the city of Rome in April 248.

Inscriptions from Alba Iulia-*Apulum* include nine votive inscriptions and two dedicatory inscriptions.¹⁵⁷ Marcus Aurelius Marcus is also known from Alba Iulia-*Apulum*, via a second votive altar to *Eponae Augustae* (AE 1954, 258=AE 1983, 815=IDR III/5, 68). This altar also apparently suffered *damnatio memoriae* and so was also dated to the reign of Trebonianus Gallus in 251-253 (Piso 1983, 248). If this is the case, then this would be the latest dated inscription from the site.

Further evidence for the Carpic Wars has been argued in the form of a votive altar from Alba Iulia-*Apulum* dedicated to *Iovi Optimo Maximo* by Gaius Valerius Serapio (CIL III 1054=IDR III/5, 171). This inscription is dated to 247-248, but solely on historical grounds due to the line '*a carpis liberatus*' and thus an association with the Carpic Wars (Piso 2005, 130-131). This interpretation is probable, but arguably not concrete. Furthermore, the dating of this inscription informed the dating of another votive altar by the same dedicant to *Dianae Reginae* to 247-248 despite no other diagnostic information (CIL III 1003=IDR III/5, 63; Piso 2005, 52-53).

Though the dating criteria for these altars as well as the commemoration of Philip the Arab's visit to *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* is somewhat problematic, their association with the Carpic Wars is still a plausible interpretation. Their presence, however, is not evidence that any part of the wars took place within Transylvania. *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* was the capital of the *tres Daciae*, and Alba Iulia-*Apulum* was the seat of the provincial governor.

¹⁵⁷ Votive: under Maximinus Thrax (235-238) CIL III 1139=ILS 3582=IDR III/5, 30; AE 1983, 803=IDR III/5, 430; under Gordian III (238-244) CIL III 1159=IDR III/5, 368; (239) CIL III 1017=IDR III/5, 81; (241) CIL III 1125=ILS 3736=IDR III/5, 294; (243) AE 1965, 36=AE 1972, 459=IDR III/5, 415; under Philip the Arab (247) CIL III 1003=IDR III/5, 63; CIL III 1054=IDR III/5, 171; under Trebonianus Gallus: (251-253) AE 1954, 258=AE 1983, 815=IDR III/5, 68; Dedicatory: under Maximinus Thrax (235-238) AE 1983, 802=AE 1984, 737=IDR III/5, 429; under Gordian III (238-244) CIL III 1175=IDR III/5, 4.

Therefore, commemoration of events that affected the larger region of the Middle Danube or the sub-Carpathian part of the province at these two centres is feasible.¹⁵⁸

One funerary inscription and six votive inscriptions are known from Turda-*Potaissa*, both from within the fortress and from the town.¹⁵⁹ Notably, three of the four latest inscriptions come from Turda-*Potaissa*. From within the fort, a pair of votive inscriptions to *Fortunae* and *Aescupladio et Hygiae* which had suffered *damnatio memoriae* were found during excavation of the intramural bath house (Bărbulescu 2012, 189-191). The dating of the altars, however, is controversial. Bărbulescu (2012, 200-201) states that the act must have occurred after the death of Gallienus in 268, thus proving occupation into the latest phases of Roman control of the region. Piso (2014, 128) stated that the *damnatio memoriae* was in fact of the briefly reigning emperor Aemelian in 253. Erring on the side of caution, the inscription has been included in the period of 253-260 for the sake of this study. The latest securely dated inscription from the region comes from the town. This is a votive inscription commemorating the construction of a temple to *Deo Azizo Bono P[uerto Conserva]tori* by the prefect of the *V Macedonica* in 256-258 (CIL III 875=ILS 4345).

One votive inscription and six dedicatory inscriptions are known from Moigrad-*Porolissum*.¹⁶⁰ All six dedicatory inscriptions were found built into the fabric of the latest phases of the fort's defences, while the votive inscription commemorated the construction of the temple of *Jupiter Dolichenus* under Gordian III in the *municipium*.¹⁶¹

Over half of period inscriptions come from these four sites alone, at 40 out of a regional total of 70. The remaining two large towns, the *coloniae* at Partoș-*Apulum* and Cluj-Napoca, add an additional eight inscriptions to this total.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ *Contra* Piso (1974), Ardevan and Zerbini (2007, 194), and Găzdac (2012, 175), who attest this is direct evidence for a Carpic invasion into Transylvania. Diaconescu (2004, 129-130) correctly observes that the direct evidence for this is indeed missing from the archaeological record.

¹⁵⁹ Funerary: under Philip the Arab (244-249) CIL III 13764; Votive: under Gordian III (238-244) CIL III 38=AE 1971, 364=ILD 462; Ae 2012, 1209; ILD 488; under Valerian/Gallienus (253-260) AE 2012, 1215-1216; (256-258) CIL III 875=ILS 4345

¹⁶⁰ Votive: under Gordian III (238-244) AE 2001, 1707=AE 2006, 1125=ILD 683; Dedicatory: under Maximinus Thrax (236-238) AE 1979, 494=ILD 666; under Philip the Arab AE 1944, 52-55=ILD 670-671, 668; under Trajan Decius (251) AE 1944=56=ILD 672.

¹⁶¹ See section 7.2.1 for further discussion.

¹⁶² Partoș-*Apulum* – Votive: under Gordian III (238-244) CIL III 990=AE 2010, 1376=IDR III/5, 31; Dedicatory: under Trajan Decius (250) CIL III 1176=ILS 514=IDR III/5, 431; under Trebonianus Gallus (252) AE 1989, 628=IDR III/5, 432). Cluj-Napoca – Votive: under Gordian III (241-244) CIL III 858; Dedicatory: under Maximinus Thrax (235) CIL III 870=ILS 4061=AE 2008, 1164; under Gordian III (238-244) CIL III 37; AE 1950, 17=ILD 540; under Philip the Arab (244-249) AE 1944, 39=AE 2006, 1102; (244-247) AE 1944, 40.

Examining the period assemblage by emperor, there is a clear drop in dated epigraphic material after the reign of Philip the Arab. (*tab 9.2*). Only eleven inscriptions date to the periods after his reign. This at first seems to correlate to the initial drop in coin circulation in the region noted in section 9.2.3. However, Mrozek (1973, 114-116) and MacMullen (1982, 244-246) both noted a consistent drop in the frequency of inscriptions of the Empire at large between the reign of Philip the Arab and Trajan Decius. Thus, this drop in frequency of inscriptions should not necessarily be seen as an indicator of provincial collapse on its own. Furthermore, while the seven inscriptions dating to the reigns of Trajan Decius and Trebonianus Gallus are distributed across five sites (*Vețel-Micia, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Alba Iulia-Apulum, Partoș-Apulum, and Moigrad-Porolissum*), three of the four inscriptions from the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus come from *Turda-Potaissa*. Consequently, the epigraphic evidence in this latest period is severely limited in distribution.

Mil. Votive	Mil. Dedicatory	Mil. Funerary	Civ. Votive	Civ. Dedicatory	Civ. Funerary	Milestone	Total
Inscriptions from the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235-238)							
			8	4		1	13
Inscriptions from the reign of Gordian III (238-244)							
13	3		5	5	1		27
Inscriptions from the reign of Philip the Arab (244-249)							
	7	1	4	7			19
Inscriptions from the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251)							
1	1			1			3
Inscriptions from the reign of Trebonianus Gallus (251-253)							
1			1	1		1	4
Inscriptions from the joint reign of Valerian/Gallienus (253-260)							
3				1			4
Total count of inscriptions							
18	11	1	18	19	1	2	70

Table 9. 2: Mid-third century inscriptions in Transylvania by category.

9.4.3 General epigraphic conclusions for Transylvania

Dated inscriptions for the region showed an overall trend of growing output through the second century, reaching its highest peak under the Severans, before declining in the mid-third century. The assemblage is dominated by votive and dedicatory inscriptions in both military and civil contexts. A high ratio of undated inscriptions to dated inscriptions has undoubtedly skewed aspects of the assemblage, which is most apparent in the absence of votive inscriptions from civilian contexts before the mid-third century. While there is a drop in the frequency of dated inscriptions beginning with the reign of Trajan Decius, the remaining inscriptions are still important.

Inscriptions used to argue for historic events, particularly the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab, are problematic. The dating of the two inscriptions from Alba Iulia-*Apulum* may be questionable as they are based solely on historic events rather than diagnostic information in the text. However, it is their interpretation that draws issue. They should be seen in the scope of events in the wider region of the province and the Middle Danube in general, rather than used to pinpoint specific actions in Transylvania.

Despite the problems with historical interpretation of the assemblage, evidence for Roman authority continues in the epigraphic record until the early 250s. Further, it can be assumed that the provincial government was still functioning when a dedication to Valerian and Gallienus was made on behalf of *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* in 255-258. The votive inscription commemorating the temple of *Bonus Puer* at Turda-*Potaissa* in 256-258 gives further evidence for investiture in civic life on some scale in a period where little activity can be proved with confidence archaeologically in the region.

9.5 Conclusion

From analysis of the corpus of period numismatic and epigraphic material from the region, a few conclusions can be made. Interpretation of both classes of material is problematic, due to a low level of secure identification of many of the finds, as well as a lack of provenance for much of the hoard and epigraphic assemblage. Nonetheless, they have been used to argue for historical events, namely the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab. While there is more tangible evidence for these events in neighbouring regions, the archaeological evidence has yet to display any level of destruction or violence during the period. While there is a drop in single coin finds, hoards, and inscriptions post Philip the Arab, detailed inspection has shown that there is no local culprit. The minting of *Provincia Dacia* issues during his reign is also notable. However, the conclusion that Transylvania was the victim of a direct attack, which then caused a crisis in the region (Piso 1974; Ardevan and Zerbini 2007, 194; Găzdac 2012, 175) is too simplistic a conclusion based on numismatic and epigraphic data alone. This conclusion looks even less plausible when combined with the complete absence in the archaeological record for any destruction or violence dating to this period. Thus, a loop in the narrative is formed whereby activity under Philip the Arab must be evidence of a Carpic invasion, and a Carpic invasion must be responsible for activity under Philip the Arab. Further, the possibility that external factors, namely communication between Transylvania and the rest of the Empire was temporarily cut off because of invasion of the sub-Carpathian region of *Dacia*, has not been taken into consideration. Given the evidence, this is a much more likely scenario, as indeed external factors could cause internal problems. Clear evidence

of destruction in the sub-Carpathian region of *Dacia*, between the rest of the Empire and Transylvania, reinforce that at least visibly, these factors were external to the region.

There is some evidence for activity into the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus. While the evidence for single coin finds is very low, the presence of inscriptions up to 256-258, as well as the continuation of minting of *Provincia Dacia* coinage up to 256 demonstrate that Roman administration was still effectively functioning up to this period. How widespread this was, as the epigraphic material is limited to *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* and *Turda-Potaissa*, is difficult to discern outside of these major population centres. The only substantial corpus of evidence for later activity are the three hoards closing under the sole reign of Gallienus and the single hoard closing under Aurelian from *Alba Iulia-Apulum*. The absence of substantial recording and the loss of the two hoards found in excavation makes their interpretation near impossible, though they are clear indicators of activity, notably at a time when coin circulation is next to non-existent in Transylvania. The absence of any further material dated to this period, coupled with almost no published archaeological reports that show clear stratigraphic sequences is important. They are an indication of life in towns continuing, rather than the continuation of the life of the town itself. The conclusions that Roman administration began to lose its grip on control of Transylvania is very clearly based on insufficient data or poor quality, and the cessation of the epigraphic habit in its wider context should not necessarily be taken as an indicator of this on its own. The disappearance of coinage from the sole reign of Gallienus through the ascension of Aurelian, however, does hint that by 260 at the latest, the grip of Roman administration over the region had begun to slip. While there is the possibility that trade continued during this period and perhaps there was a process of payment in kind, the level of artefact studies, excavation, and recording means that no trace is perceptible of such a situation.

Part Four: Conclusions

10. Southwest Germany and Transylvania at the End of Roman Rule

10.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the data from Part Two, Southwest Germany and Part Three, Transylvania, to highlight both similarities and differences in the broader trends discernible in the archaeological evidence for the final decades of Roman control. General conclusions are provided on each region in order to re-engage with the material. While there are problematic aspects in the archaeology of both regions, they are most acute in Transylvania. Some regional patterns are apparent, however. Southwest Germany appeared to go through a transition period that took place over a number of decades and culminated with Roman abandonment of the region. This was likely not due to any single factor, but a number of issues. In Transylvania, aspects of upkeep and repair at military sites and evidence for the continuation of town life into the mid-250s demonstrates that some form of normalcy was regained after the devastating effects of the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab. While contrary to previous scholarship, there is deemed to be no evidence for the war taking place in Transylvania itself, the temporary effect of being cut off from the rest of the Empire appears to have had catastrophic consequences for the circulation of coinage.

Due to widely varying levels in the quality of excavation and recording between Southwest Germany and Transylvania, no more than general comments on the comparison of site records can be made. However, the numismatic and epigraphic assemblages show that while both regions experienced difficulty in acquiring coinage during the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251) and Trebonianus Gallus (251-253), Southwest Germany was able to recover, while the effects appear to be much more permanent in Transylvania. This is likely the result of the aftereffects of the Carpic Wars, which appear to have had a lasting impact on Transylvania's connection to the rest of the Empire.

10.2 Southwest Germany conclusions

After examining the regional data, what is clear first and foremost, is that the concept of *Limesfall* and a finite end to Roman control in the year 260 can no longer apply (*fig 10.1*). Though some scholars (Schallmayer 1995; 1996; 2018, 323; Fischer 1999; Czysz and Faber 2005, 139) still tend to ascribe to the notion of an Alemannic invasion being the main cause for the end of Roman rule in the region, the reality is more nuanced.

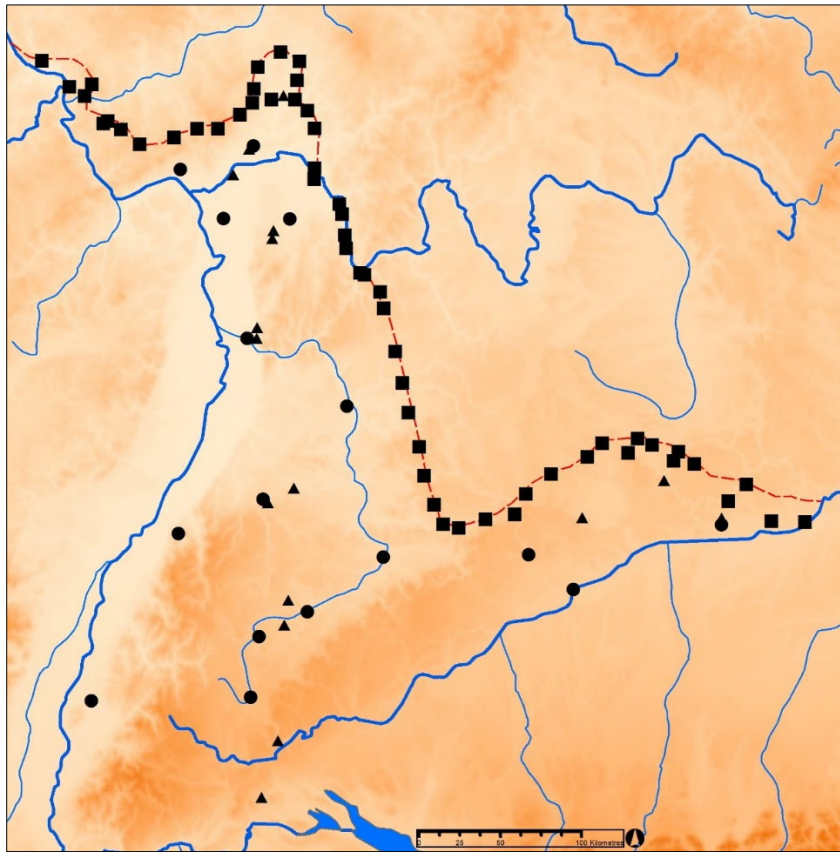


Figure 10. 1: Southwest Germany in the mid-third century.

Key: Squares – Forts; Circles – Towns; Triangles – Rural sites

Military sites occupied the bulk of the study. Precise dating was not possible for most features, but there was still a significant amount of evidence for potential mid-third century activity in the region. Military, town and rural sites all showed slightly different findings. All three types of sites showed activity that emphasized a shift in the use of occupied space throughout the period, leading to a gradual decline in settlement and occupation. Likewise, indicators that have been used in the literature for destruction and violence, such as burning layers, skeletal remains, and the deposition of numismatic and material hoards (Fischer 1999) are open to multiple explanations, and need not necessarily indicate a brutal or abrupt end to Roman control of the region..

Activity at sites in the region took varied forms. In military settlements, this equated to the reconstruction of barracks at some sites with drystone foundations and the resizing and repurposing of bath houses. Furthermore, repair and upkeep both within the forts and in the extramural settlements well into the period, showed that while there was a shift in the use of space and resources, there was no plan to abandon the sites. Whether this change was due to the reduction of the garrisons (Nuber 1990, 62-64; Strobel 1999, 28; Jae and Scholz 2000, 415; Scholz 2006, 87-88, 98) in the mid-third century is open to debate, but nonetheless

something must have been the catalyst. It is not possible to say with confidence when occupation of these sites ended, as there are few datable artefacts in stratigraphic sequences to date occupation past 260 outside of the rare coin find, such as at the fortlet at Haselburg. The argument has been raised that the presence of unstratified coin finds and some Late Antique brooches may hint at continued activity or reoccupation (Heeren 2016), but until there is a regional undertaking of reworking older site assemblages and stray finds, this must remain solely a hypothesis.

The *Raetian* stretch of the frontier appears to have been affected differently and earlier than sections in *Germania Superior*. Reuter (2007) points out the ubiquity of burning in the final sequences of almost all excavated forts and extramural settlements, along with a lack of coinage from excavation post-dating 253. However, it is impossible to substantiate claims that all this destruction took place in Spring 254 at the hands of Germanic raiders (Reuter 2007, 143-145), and on balance highly likely that a range of factors were involved. Even working in periods with higher resolution data, it is not possible to attribute every instance of burning in a region to the same cause and to the same moment, let alone in the mid-third century. It is nonetheless important not to forget the very clear example of violent and intentional destruction attributed to the raids of 233 seen at Heldenbergen (Czysz 2003, 180-193). Ultimately, it is questionable how visible raiding activities would be in the archaeological record. On a wider scale, evidence for violence is limited to a small number of sites at disparate locations across the frontier. Without sealed destruction levels or precisely dated finds, it is difficult to say when many of the sites were abandoned or burnt down, let alone how.

Like military sites, towns witnessed a change in the organization and use of space. This is most noticeable near the frontier with the late erection of the large hall/depot at Frankfurt-Heddernheim and the fortification in the interior of Faimingen in the very latest sequences of Roman occupation. The erection of town walls in some cases into the mid-third century may be further evidence that although this was a transitional period, there was no intention to withdraw from the region. Like forts, there is a lack of widespread destruction, with less than half of the sites having evidence for burning layers in the final Roman sequences. Further, wells provide the only evidence for skeletal remains associated with the mid-third century, with complete individuals deposited in wells in Frankfurt-Heddernheim and Ladenburg, and the remains of individuals exposed to the elements at Pforzheim. Wells also seem to have become repositories for the remains of Jupiter columns, a practice which though not unique to the region or the period, has been seen as evidence for disruption, either by raiding Germanic

peoples or the local population (Noelke 2006, 308-319; Noelke 2010-2011, 157-164; Konrad 2015). Importantly, both the skeletal remains and Jupiter columns are divorced from destruction deposits at all sites, further emphasizing their deposition should not necessarily be contemporaneous with a specific event.

Though it is difficult to state with confidence the final Roman activity on a site, in many instances this appears to be the backfilling and levelling over of cellars and wells, implying that there was likely a view to continued occupation, and abandonment was a gradual transition (Reis 2010, 271-274). The evidence for activity later than this could have been destroyed by medieval and early modern construction (Reis 2010, 271), but in general, there is currently little to support continued occupation in towns after the mid-third century (Reis 2010, 274; Heising 2014, 341-343; Konrad 2015).

Rural sites saw the best documented change in their use and layout, due to the focus of investigation being in the modern period. Evidence from Wurmlingen showed that after a catastrophic fire destroyed the main building, the occupants turned to scouring the site in the process of recycling metals. Reuter (2003, 63-65) claims this was shortly thereafter taken up by Germanic peoples, as evidenced by the construction of a sunken feature building and post hole structure, however there was no evidence that the site was used for anything more than industrial activities during this phase. Likewise, a post hole structure was erected in the main building at Büßlingen in its latest phases, but it was unclear if this was the latest evidence of Roman occupation or early Germanic settlement (Heiligmann-Batsch 1997, 117).

Unsurprisingly as its location was on the southern right bank of the Rhine across from the retained territory of *Germania Superior*, the *villa* Laufenburg was continually occupied (Rothkegel 1994, 64). The abandonment of settlements on the whole appears to have been without strife save for two *villae* near the Danube in *Raetia*; Treuchtlingen (Koch 1993, 47) and Nordlingen (Czys and Faber 2005, 108-110), both of which had clear evidence of human skeletal remains inside of the final destruction deposits.

Examining the numismatic evidence independent of site records, it was found that while the coin circulation in the region saw an overall drop in the mid-third century, this was due to a lack of coin circulation on military sites. After a severe drop in coinage in the period from 249-253, both towns and rural sites recover, and indeed rural and stray finds then predominate. Military sites, however, appear to have suffered a lack in coinage from this period onward. The stabilization of coinage in the period from 260 onwards cannot be attributed to an influx of Gallic Empire coinage alone, but this was certainly a contributing factor. Meanwhile, hoarding patterns in the region displayed evidence for activity in the

period post-260, showing that there was still activity in the region. Outside of the hoards found in excavation at military sites, the hoarding evidence did not support the traditional explanation for the end of Roman control over the region.

Epigraphic evidence showed similar trends to the coin distribution for the region. Into the mid-240s, both civic and military life seems to have continued as normal, with evidence of both construction and votive inscriptions. While there was the late example of a post-260 inscription at Hausen ob Lontal, the overall assemblage ends in the period 249-251 during the reign of Trajan Decius. The high number of milestones, which continue into the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus implies that there was still investiture by the government into the infrastructure of the region.

Thus, the data implies that the period is one of transition, with a number of mitigating factors contributing to the decline and eventual abandonment of the region by Roman authorities. Problems in coin circulation from 249-253 seem to coincide with a drop in new inscriptions, though the epigraphic fallout is more indicative of an Empire-wide phenomenon. This may have some implications for the repurposing and reduction of occupied space at some military sites, if the drop in coinage is seen as a symptom of a lack of coin users per Nuber (1990, 62-64) and not a lack of coin supply. However, this view does not explain the stabilization in coinage at towns in rural contexts. Regardless, Roman authority in the region may have begun to unravel by the mid-250s. Explicit evidence for Germanic raiding in the region is largely absent, as is occupation of Roman sites by Alemannic settlers. While the influx of a new population in the second half of the mid-third century may explain the stabilization of coinage (Sommer 2014), the archaeological evidence at present does not support large scale Alemannic immigration into the region until the very end of the third century (Drinkwater 2007, 80-83; Fingerlin 1997, 125; Steuer 1997, 149; 1998, 281-285). Further, outside of the rural sites at Wurmlingen and Bietigheim, there is no stratigraphic evidence for early Alemannic settlement at Roman sites in the interior of the region prior to this time.

Whether or not the area was under the control, directly, or indirectly, of the Gallic Empire for the duration of its existence is also difficult to discern. The discovery of the Augsburg Victory Altar would seem to confirm that it initially was, the low amount of Gallic Empire coinage as well as the presence of the inscription at Hausen ob Lontal might suggest that there was a nominal reconquest of the region under Gallienus (Dietz 1996; 2012). This is impossible to prove archaeologically. Even by Okamura's (1984, 257-261) interpretation of the destruction of Niederbieber by forces loyal to the Gallic Empire, it would be the only plausible example from the region.

10.3 Transylvania conclusions

The key themes in the archaeological narrative of Transylvania during the mid-third century are based solely on the literary, numismatic, and epigraphic sources. This is in large part due to the widespread practice of unstratigraphic keyhole excavation combined and a sporadic publication record that leaves interpretation of many sites impossible beyond the basic archaeological developments. This not only has an impact on structural interpretation, but the dating of finds, which are generally given a 'Roman' date, roughly corresponding to the second and third centuries.

Nevertheless, the two main elements in the narrative, the devastating effect of the Carpic Wars in Transylvania (Piso 1974, 308; Petolescu 1995, 120; Găzdac 2002b, 75; Ardevan and Zerbini 2007, 194) and the abandonment of the region either under Gallienus (260-268) or Aurelian (270-275) (Macrea 1941; 1969 465; Macrea and Tudor 1960, 465; Petolescu 1995, 125; Bărbulescu 1998, 61; Protase 2000, 402; Ardevan and Zerbini 2007, 204-207; Petac 2011, 203) has influenced the interpretation of the final phases of Roman occupation at most sites in the region (*fig. 10.2*). There are slight differences in the site makeup to Southwest Germany as well. Two legionary fortresses were present in the region; the *XIII Gemina* at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and the *V Macedonica* at Turda-*Potaissa*. The *colonia* at Turda-*Potaissa* and Alba Iulia-*Apulum* and the *municipium* at Moigrad-*Porolissum* evolved out of the extramural settlements of the military installations into towns in their own right, and as such were treated as towns rather than extramural settlements.

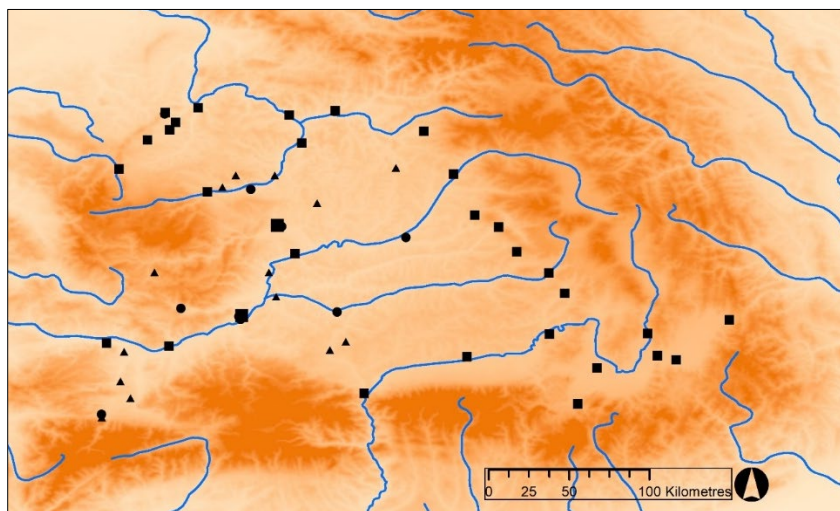


Figure 10. 2: Transylvania in the mid-third century.

Key: Large squares – Legionary fortresses; Small squares – Auxiliary forts; Circles – towns; Triangles – Rural sites

Military sites provided the best evidence for activity in the mid-third century. Like Southwest Germany, the emphasis of research in Transylvania has been on military sites. Unlike

Southwest Germany, there is little emphasis on the investigation of extramural settlements, meaning it was not possible to look at the fort and settlement separately. Furthermore, the most extensively researched sites were clustered in the northwest corner of the region, meaning the defensive line along the Carpathian arc is not well understood.

Despite military sites being the primary focus of scholars, much of the archaeological evidence stated to be mid-third century activity is not able to be dated to a period other than 'third century'. The main exception to this is the incorporation of four inscriptions dating from the reign of Philip the Arab and one from the reign of Trajan Decius which were built into the fabric of a bastion at Moigrad-*Porolissum*, giving a *terminus post quem* of 251 (Gudea 1982, 87; Hügel 2003, 135; Isac 2008, 142).

Further, dating is usually based on evidence for construction of the stone fort. The problematic nature of this wide range of dating is seen most clearly in the extreme case of Brâncovenești. The excavators were not able to deduce if the catastrophic fire which ended Roman activity in the fort and extramural settlement took place during the Marcomannic Wars of the mid-second century, or during the mid-third century (Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 73). However, some level of activity was able to shed light on the survey period. Due to the style of excavation, only large-scale activity was perceptible. This included structural repairs to the curtain walls and bastions, blocking of gates, and in some cases the construction of building annexes over the *via sagularis* inside the fort. These repairs usually included spoliated funerary monuments, architectural fragments, and inscriptions. With little dating evidence and no explanation for these developments, excavators turned to barbarian invasion as the main driver for these repairs and construction. They stated that the material used in construction was evidence the repairs were done 'in haste', either in anticipation of or after a barbarian attack (Gudea and Pop 1971, 65; Bărbulescu 1987, 29-30; Matei and Bajusz 1997, 46; Protase and Zrínyi 2011, 71). Though neither the Carpi nor the Carpic Wars are mentioned as the exact perpetrators except in the case of the legionary fortress at Turda-*Potaissa* (Bărbulescu 1987, 29-30), one can assume that they drove narratives of provincial collapse in Transylvania. However, there is no evidence, on a regional basis in general, and specifically at military sites, to imply that Transylvania was the victim of raiding or invasion during this period. Any evidence for burning layers is limited to four sites, one of which is Brâncovenești, mentioned above.

Recently, scholars have argued that these repairs and later constructions should not be seen as proof of barbarian invasion, but as a continuation of the daily routine of soldiers, which would have included upkeep and repair of the military installations (Hügel 2003, 142-145; Isac 2008,

145-146). Unfortunately, due to the level of excavation and recording it is difficult to say if these repairs and changes to the fort structures took place over a longer period or if they are broadly contemporary. This interpretation is the most plausible given the absence of higher resolution data.

In many respects, the excavation data from towns in the region is in a poorer state than that of military sites. Consequently, there has been no real synthesis of the site data from towns in the region. Structural evidence for mid-third century activity is limited to the construction and repair of large *domus*-type structures at the *coloniae* at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, Cluj-Napoca, and Partoş-*Apulum*, and the *municipium* at Alba Iulia-*Apulum*. There was no secure dating of the sequences of these structures, but on the general stratigraphy, they appeared to have been constructed or majorly renovated in the final phases of Roman occupation. The remainder of evidence came from the presence of ten numismatic hoards, five of which came from the *municipium* at Alba Iulia-*Apulum*. The examples from Alba Iulia range in closing date from Philip the Arab to Aurelian, however their interpretation is hampered by lack of context and full identification and recovery in most cases.

Inscriptions do imply that civic life was maintained well into the period (Ardevan 1998, 335-336). These include dedications made by the *Concilium trium Daciarum* and on behalf of the inhabitants of *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* and Alba Iulia-*Apulum* to the imperial family, the christening of Partoş-*Apulum* as 'Chrysopolis', and the construction of a temple at Turda-*Potaissa*. Overall, that inhabitants in towns continued to maintain aspects of civic life well into the 250s is clear from both the *domus* constructions and epigraphic data. However, like military sites, if this continued into the end of the Roman period or perhaps later is not possible to discern. Arguments have been made via stray finds that 'Roman' cultural norms existed into at least the early fourth century and perhaps beyond (Diaconescu 1999; Diaconescu et al. 2006), but the structural evidence cannot support such claims.

Rural sites provided the least amount of information on the period, with only six of the fifteen sites alleged to exhibit mid-third century occupation yielding datable material. However, none of these reports goes into any detail on the justification for dating the finds to this period, and only the site of Juc-Herghelie (Diaconescu 2012b, 58) has any numismatic evidence to support mid-third century activity. Thus, there are no meaningful conclusions that can be made about the character of rural settlement in the region during the final stages of Roman rule.

The entirety of the narrative for Transylvania is derived from numismatic and epigraphic data. Thus, this is where the arguments for the region being the main theatre of the Carpic Wars as well as the beginning of abandonment under Gallienus are formulated. In the sub-Carpathian region of *Dacia* there is clear evidence for destruction layers dated broadly to the period of the Carpic Wars, however, such evidence is largely missing from Transylvania. Nonetheless, hoarding evidence under Gordian III and Philip the Arab (Loriot 1976; Petolescu 1995, 120; Suciú 2000, 138; Găzduc 2010, 140-141; 2012, 175) has been used in conjunction with the presence of two inscriptions, one commemorating Philip the Arab by the *Concilium trium Daciarum* at *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (IDR III/2, 81), and a votive altar to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* for being *a carpis liberatus* (CIL III 1054=IDR III/5, 17) as justification for a narrative of violent destruction following invasion (Piso 1974). However, only four of the eighteen hoards with closing dates under Gordian III and Philip the Arab were fully recovered and identified, and none were found in excavation. This makes their suitability as evidence questionable. The local minting of *Provincia Dacia* bronze issues from 246-257, and a severe drop in coin circulation under Trajan Decius and Trebonianus Gallus has been argued as further proof of the region being affected by the Carpic Wars (Callu 1969, 18-19; Macrea 1978, 172; Alföldy-Găzduc and Găzduc 2004, 249-252; 2005; Găzduc and Alföldy-Găzduc 2008, 151-171; Ardevan and Zerbini 2007, 195). Indeed, though there is a small rebound during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (253-260). Coin circulation becomes almost non-existent beginning with the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268), implying that problems began in the early 250s and that by the 260s, the region had started to fall out of the financial sphere of the Empire. Military sites were especially affected by this, with no known coinage reaching them between 260-270.

Furthermore, though inscriptions continue until 256-258 (CIL III 875=ILS 4345), there is a noticeable drop in the frequency of inscriptions beginning with the reign of Trajan Decius. While this appears in tandem with the problems of coin circulation, it may be indicative of larger Empire-wide trends. One critical factor that has been overlooked in previous narratives is that Transylvania need not have been directly attacked by the Carpi to have generated this evidence. *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* was the capital of the *Tres Daciae* and *Alba Iulia-Apulium* was the seat of the provincial governor. Both towns and the region at large would have been affected by events and connected to regions further afield.

Though in general the archaeological data does not allow much complex interpretation, it would seem that exchange and supply networks with the rest of the Empire were severely disrupted by the Carpic War, which occurred south of the Carpathians. The effects of this

were felt mostly in the ability of coinage to reach Transylvania, which the opening of a regional mint was ultimately not able to fix. Numismatic and epigraphic data show that by the 260s the region had begun to slip from the grasp of the Empire. The continuation of upkeep and maintenance of forts and high-status dwellings in towns may provide evidence that this was a longer process which did not immediately have a severe impact, but the lack of nuanced stratigraphic information means that there is no way to state with confidence that this was the case.

10.4 Comparative analyses

The general conclusions for both regions have pointed out where existing narratives have fallen short in interpretation of the archaeological evidence. An overreliance on the historical record or a necessity to provide an absolute date to processes that take place over an extended period of time create untenable interpretations that in most cases cannot hold up when put to close inspection. However, the next step is to now see if there are any similarities between the two regions that may give some clue as to the overall causes of provincial collapse in these regions.

10.4.1 Site data comparison

Comparative analysis of the site data between Southwest Germany and Transylvania is not possible beyond very general commentary. This is due to the widely varying level of excavation, recording, publication, and finds identification between both regions as noted in Chapter Three. Problems of circular argumentation for dating still exist in Southwest Germany, but the method of excavation and the fact that finds work is still in its infancy in Transylvania means that beyond a basic analysis of ‘mid-third century’ activity, not much can be said. The lack of nuanced features in the site records of Transylvania inhibit this even further. Looking at basic percentages for activity across both regions, there are not even simple patterns that can be extracted except for a somewhat equal level of evidence for construction across both sites (*tab 10.1*). The absence of meaningful data from rural sites in Transylvania means there are no similarities whatsoever because there is no comparative data.

Generally, both regions seemed to go through a transitional period which was expressed in distinct ways. In Southwest Germany, this was seen in the modification of occupied space, at military sites, exemplified through the modifications to the interior of forts and their extramural bath houses, and at towns, most notably via the construction of the large hall building at Frankfurt-Heddernheim. In Transylvania, this was seen in the visible repairs and upkeep of military sites, and in towns in construction and upkeep of *domus*-type structures.

Region	Construction		Demolition		Destruction		Hoarding		Total no. of Sites	
	No. of Sites	Percentage	No. of Sites	Percentage	No. of Sites	Percentage	No. of Sites	Percentage	No. of Sites	Percentage
Military Sites										
SW Germany	20	35.70%	12	21.40%	28	50%	10	17.90%	56	100%
Transylvania	14	43.80%	2	6.30%	4	12.50%	3	9.40%	32	100%
Towns										
SW Germany	7	41.20%	8	47.10%	7	41.20%	9	52.90%	17	100%
Transylvania	5	55.60%	2	22.20%	3	33.30%	4	44.40%	9	100%
Rural Sites										
SW Germany	4	22.20%	8	44.40%	7	38.90%	2	11.10%	18	100%
Transylvania	2	14.30%			1	7.10%			14	100%
Totals										
SW Germany	31	34.10%	28	30.80%	42	46.20%	21	23.10%	91	100%
Transylvania	21	38.20%	4	7.30%	8	14.50%	9	16.40%	55	100%

Table 10. 1: Percentages of mid-third century activity across site types in Southwest Germany and Transylvania

The only similar activity that took place across both regions was the blocking of fort gates. (tab 10.2). There was a considerably higher incidence of gate blocking in Transylvania than there was in Southwest Germany. There is also a wide range of variability in both the technique and blocking of fort gates, across both regions. In Southwest Germany, only blockages at Bad Ems and Osterburken were dated to the final phases of activity with confidence, with one of the blockages occurring at a fort that modern scholarship had found was abandoned at the beginning of the third century. In Transylvania, six of the ten total blockages were found to date to the latest phases of occupation in the forts, but there was difficulty in dating all but one of them precisely to the mid-third century. The exception to this was *Moigrad-Porolissum*, where an inscription from the reign of Maximinus Thrax was built into the blockage (Tóth 1978, 26-27). Thus, on the grounds of dating, the evidence is shaky in both regions.

Blocking of fort gates								
Region	Blocked, Dated		Blocked, Undated		Not Blocked		Total no. of Sites	
	No. of Sites	Percentage	No. of Sites	Percentage	No. of Sites	Percentage	No. of Sites	Percentage
SW Germany	2	3.60%	7	12.50%	47	83.90%	56	100%
Transylvania	6	19.40%	4	12.90%	21	67.70%	31	100%

Table 10. 2: Blocking of fort gates across military sites in Southwest Germany and Transylvania

Differences in material used for the blocking of gates are also very apparent, both on a regional and a comparative level. In Southwest Germany, there was evidence for the usage of stone to fill in gateways at Arzbach (Dahm 1900b, 3), Bad Ems (Bodewig 1911, 5), Hunzel (Bodewig 1897, 2), Saalburg (Jacobi 1897, 80, Taf. 6), and Osterburken (Schumacher 1895, 8-10), while at Holzhausen (Pallat 1904, 13), Kemel (Lehner 1901, 3), Echzell (Baatz 1963-1964, 45), and the western fort at Öhringen (Herzog 1897, 10), timber constructions of wooden piles were used, likely to brace the gates shut. In Transylvania, no evidence of timber blocking was found, and the preferred method tended to be the usage of spoliated monuments, architectural fragments, and inscriptions, which were used in the blocking of gates at Turda-

Potaissa (Bărbulescu 1987, 29-30), Gilău (Isac 1997a, 56), Romita (Matei and Bajusz 1997, 41), Moigrad-*Porolissum* (Tóth 1978, 26-27), and Ilișua (Protase et al. 1997, 48). At Bologa (Gudea 1997a, 44), buttressed walls and tamped earth were employed, while at Cășeiu (Isac 2003, 103-104) and Inlăceni (Gudea 1979, 113), transverse walls were built. The evidence at Brețcu is not strong, as the excavators could not decide if the presence of stone was indicative of thresholds or remnants of blocking (Gudea 1980, 299), and at Râșnov, there is no mention of the materials used (Gudea and Pop 1971, 15). Furthermore, the evidence of hearths and possible dwellings in the blocked gateways at Gilău (Isac 1997a, 56), Bologa (Gudea 1997a, 44), and Cășeiu (Isac 2003, 103-104) suggest that the blockages at these three sites were to maximize the use of inhabitable space inside the fort walls. The choice of which gates to block is also varied, with no clear pattern or distinction as to why a certain gate or gates were selected.

Though there are exceptions, such as at Housesteads and Great Chesters, the blocking of fort gates along Hadrian's Wall was largely executed to deal with redundant entrances jutting north of the Wall (Rob Collins, *pers. comm.*). Though much of the stratigraphic evidence surrounding the blockages was destroyed in antiquarian excavation (Breeze and Dobson 1972, 194-197), the location of the blockages lends itself to interpretation. However, the situation with Hadrian's Wall is unique in that the forts are constructed into the Wall itself. In Southwest Germany and Transylvania, forts sat behind any static frontier barriers. Further, the variation in material used for blocking the gates, as well as the repurposing of the interior of the gateways at some sites implies that blockages were *ad hoc* and completed for varying reasons. While the anticipation or threat of hostile action cannot be ruled out, they should be seen as a wider implication of the transitional nature of the third century in general and the mid-third century in particular.

10.4.2 Numismatic data comparison

The numismatic data for both regions provides the best material for analysis. This is because it can be arranged and formatted in a way that provides clear, comparative data. Both similar and divergent patterns are clear in the assemblages from both areas. Though there is a significantly higher volume of coinage from Southwest Germany than Transylvania, calculating the coinage in *per mill* values and separating them into Reece periods for the general assemblage and regnal periods for the mid-third century assemblage produces comparable values that are able to be placed side by side.¹⁶³ Thus, it is possible to examine

¹⁶³ 34,688 total single coin finds from Southwest Germany, including 1987 mid-third century coins, while there are 10,488 single coin finds from Transylvania, including 1066 mid-third century coins.

relative trends in coin circulation across regions and site types with varying quantities of coinage. In general, both regions saw a steady decline from Reece periods X (193-222) to period XII (238-260) (*fig 10.3*). Rates of coin loss for Transylvania were overall significantly higher during these periods than for Southwest Germany, but the overall negative trend is the same. However, beginning with period XIII (260-275), coin loss for Transylvania virtually disappears, while in Southwest Germany it continues to decline into period XIV (275-296). Stray finds generally follow the same patterns of coin loss as the regional means, though with higher rates of coin loss (*fig. 10.4*).

Military sites also follow the same trends as the regional means, though in contrast to stray finds, the decline is more pronounced (*fig. 10.5*). Towns, on the other hand, experience a slight increase in coin loss between period XI (222-238) and XII (*fig. 10.6*). This is followed by a drop in coin loss in both regions following period XII. This is seen in Southwest Germany through to period XIV, while there is a very pronounced drop in Transylvania between periods XII and XIII. Though coin loss for towns recovers in Southwest Germany in period XV (296-317), it stays at very low levels in Transylvania from period XIII onwards. In rural contexts, coin loss stays at relatively stable levels in Southwest Germany between periods XI-XIV, while in Transylvania it follows the same general pattern of decline from periods X-XIII, after which it evaporates in the region (*fig. 10.7*).

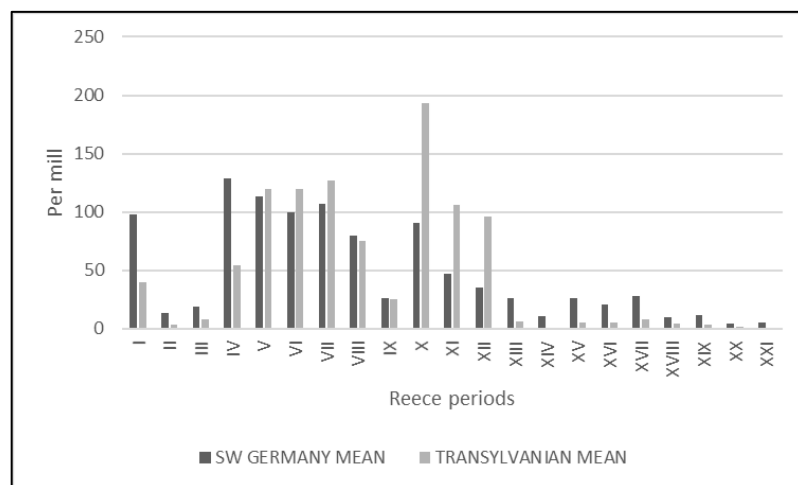


Figure 10. 3: Comparative regional coin loss means

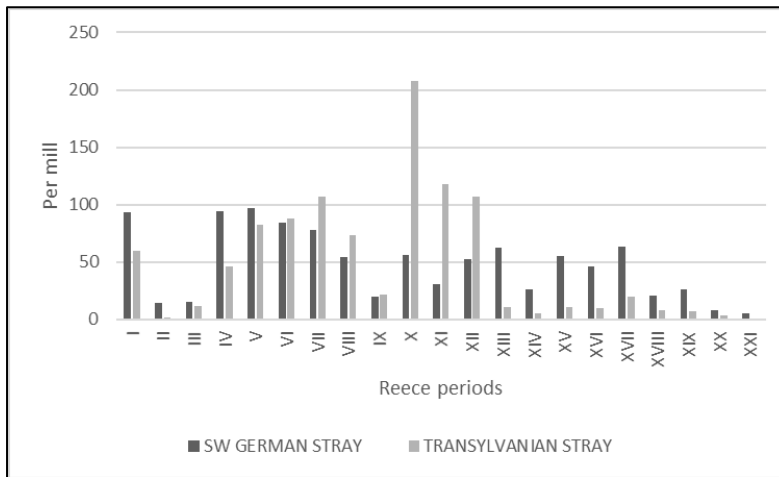


Figure 10. 4: Comparative stray coin loss means

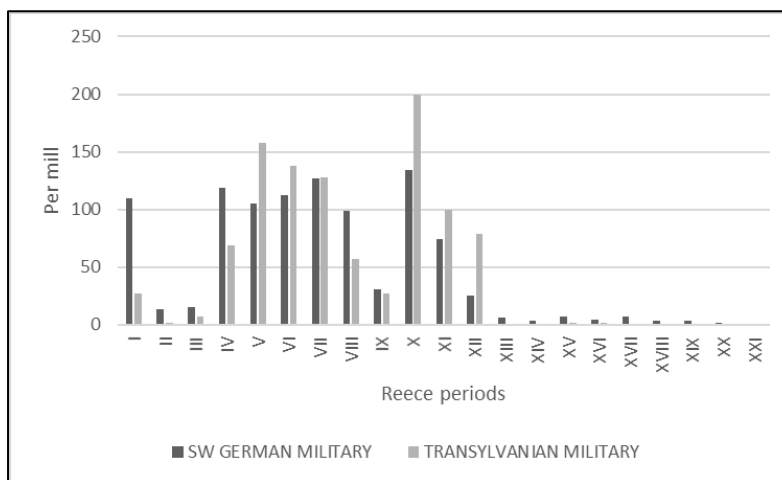


Figure 10. 5: Comparative coin loss means for military sites

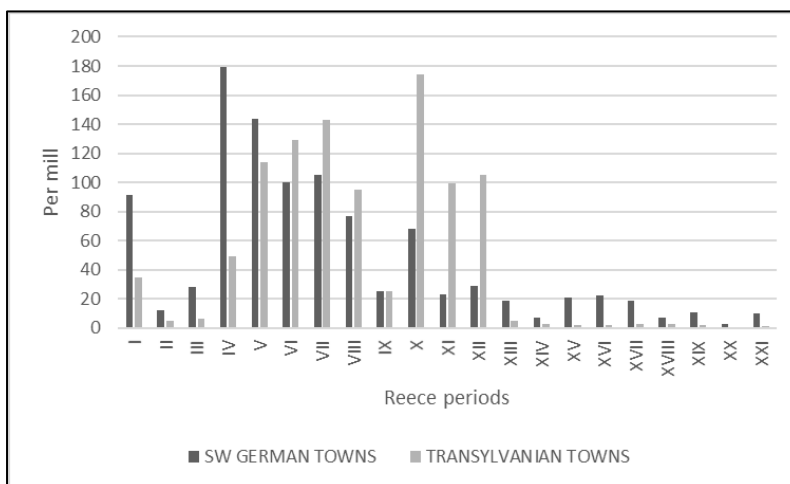


Figure 10. 6: Comparative coin loss means for towns

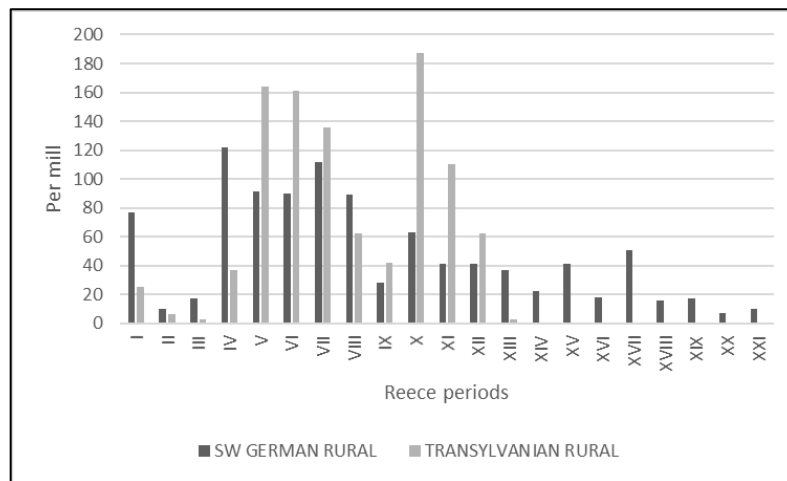


Figure 10. 7: Comparative coin loss means for rural contexts

Though the decline in coin loss in Transylvania is more dramatic across all site types than in Southwest Germany, it is important to note that the general patterns, at least from periods X through XII are the same. Though both regions experience a decline from period XII to period XIII, the drop is much more severe in Transylvania, leading to an almost complete cessation of coinage. Except in the case of rural contexts, there is an overall drop in coin loss, most pronounced at military sites. However, the regional patterns become divergent after period XIII. While both regions experience a level of recovery beginning in period XV, it is still at very low levels for Transylvania compared to Southwest Germany. Though Southwest Germany still registers a small level of coin loss at military sites following period XIII, the recovery of coinage is seen mainly in towns. The higher recovery of coin loss in Southwest Germany compared to Transylvania in period XV is likely attributable to the region's proximity to the Empire, which lay only on the other side of the Rhine and continued interaction between the Empire and the region. Conversely, the inability of coinage to penetrate into Transylvania following period XII in any meaningful way is in large part due to its distance from the extant Empire, separated not only by the Danube, but the sub-Carpathian region of the former province as well. Thus, it appears that both regions experienced problems with the circulation of coinage in the period before the end of Roman administration. However, in order to examine the problem in deeper detail, it is important to look at the numismatic profiles for the survey period more in-depth.

Looking at the regional means for the mid-third century, the decline in coin loss for Southwest Germany begins with the regnal period of 238-244 (Gordian III) (*fig 10.8*). It continues a decline that becomes pronounced from 249-251 (Trajan Decius) through to 251-253 (Trebonianus Gallus). Recovery begins in 253-260 (Valerian and Gallienus joint reign), and though dropping slightly from 260-268 (Gallienus sole reign/Postumus), continues to

increase from 268-270 (Claudius II/Victorinus) through 270-275 (Aurelian/Tetricus). While Transylvania experiences an increase in coin loss between 238-244 and 244-249 (Philip the Arab), this is due to the beginning of *Provincia Dacia* issues in 246. The same low levels of coin loss are seen in 249-251 and 251-253, as well as the recovery in 253-260. However, beginning with 260-268, the level of coin loss drops to extremely low levels, which continues through the rest of the survey period. Like with general coin loss patterns, when broken down into regnal periods, the stray finds follow the same patterns, but with higher rates of coin loss than the regional means, with the exception being a slight dip in coin loss between 268-270 and 270-275 for Southwest Germany (*fig. 10.9*).

Coin loss at military sites follows the same pattern as the regional means for the mid-third century, though the overall recovery in 253-260 is much less pronounced (*fig 10.10*). While the levels of coin loss are still relatively low for Southwest Germany, they are still significantly greater than Transylvania. In towns, the recovery in 253-260 is more or less the same in Southwest Germany and Transylvania (*fig. 10.11*). Beginning in 260-268, Transylvanian coin loss drops to extremely low levels, barely registering on the histogram, while there is an overall increase in coinage from 260-268 to 270-275 in Southwest Germany. The small quantity of mid-third century coinage from rural contexts in Transylvania (24 coins), makes any comparative analysis difficult. However, there is still no coinage making it to rural contexts in Transylvania following 244-249, while in Southwest Germany, coin loss reaches a low point in 249-251, and then recovers (*fig. 10.12*).

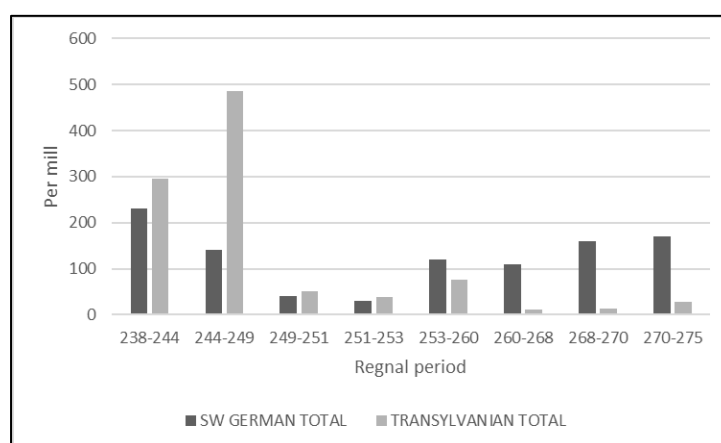


Figure 10. 8: Comparative mid-third century regional coin loss means

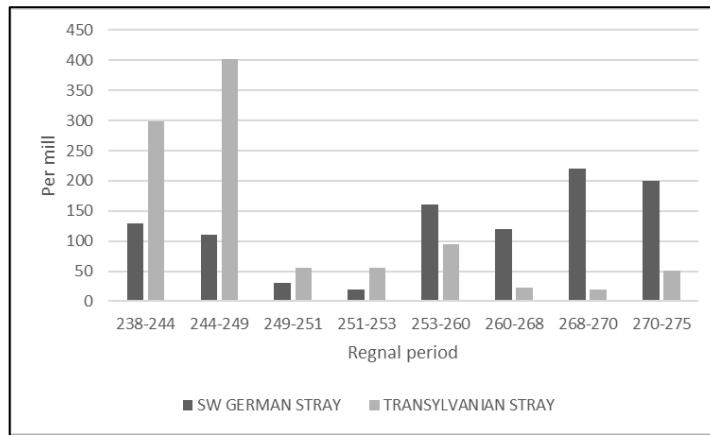


Figure 10. 9: Comparative mid-third century stray coin loss means

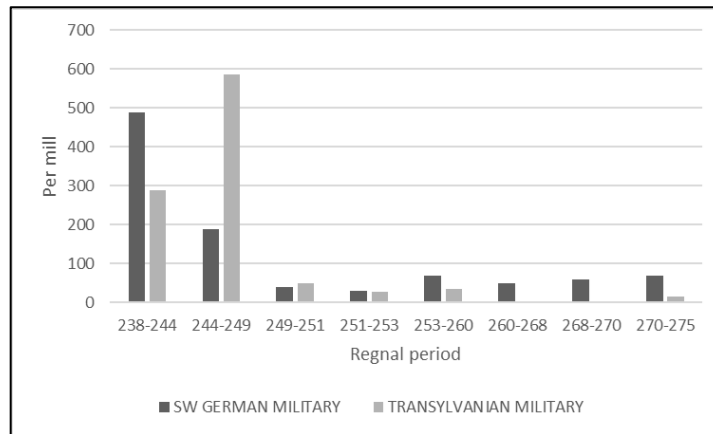


Figure 10. 10: Comparative mid-third century military coin loss means

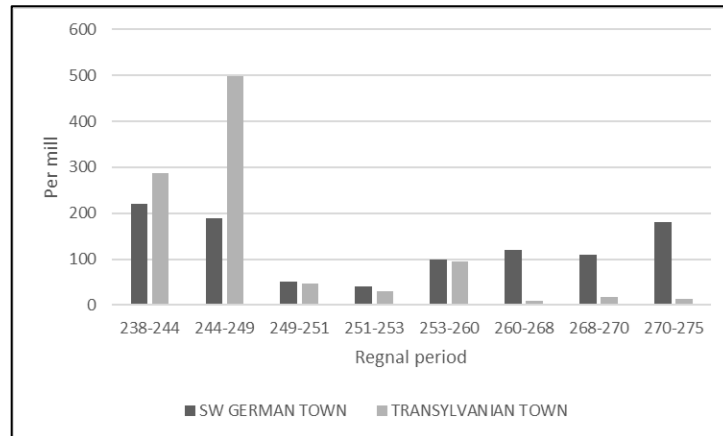


Figure 10. 11: Comparative mid-third century town coin loss means

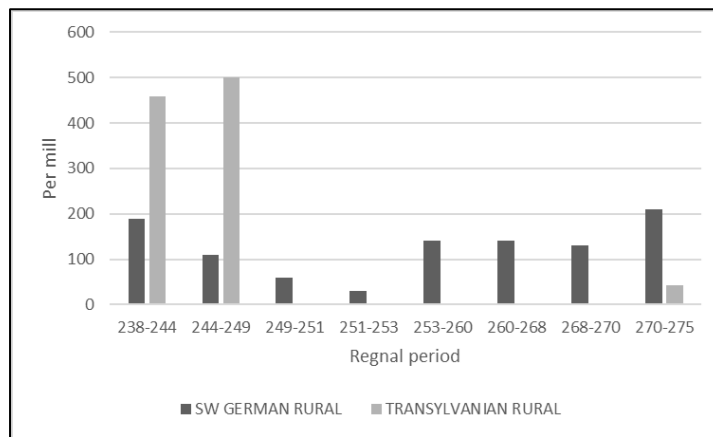


Figure 10. 12: Comparative mid-third century rural coin loss means

Looking at the results of comparing the numismatic data from both regions side by side, it is clear that both regions underwent some kind of economic crisis during the reigns of Trajan Decius (249-251) and Trebonianus Gallus (251-253). This can be further elaborated in the context of coin circulation of frontier provinces. Găzdac (2010, 117) found that *Moesia Inferior* experienced no coin circulation at investigated sites from 249-253, in a similar development to both Transylvania and Southwest Germany. Furthermore, from 249-268, coin circulation gradually increased in *Pannonia Superior*, while for *Pannonia Inferior* and *Moesia Superior* and *Inferior*, circulation gradually decreased (Găzdac 2010, 117). However, this is followed by a sharp increase in coin circulation from 268-275 (Găzdac 2010, 117). Găzdac (2010, 117-118) did find an exponential decrease in circulation for the Middle and Lower Danube from the period of 275-305, but the picture would likely be more nuanced if coinage were separated between the later third century (Reece period XIV) and the Tetrarchy (Reece period XV).

Recent study of the coin loss for Roman Britain displayed similar trends; an exponential increase in coin loss was seen between Reece period XII (238-260) and period XIII, due to the high number of severely debased coins circulating in the province (260-275) (Walton 2012, 35). However, while there is a small decrease in coin loss for period XIV in Britain it was still at a very high level. The methodology employed by Găzdac (2010) uses a coefficient number of coins per year of an emperor's reign in lieu of calculating *per mills*, but the findings, at least from the reign of Claudius II (268-270), to Aurelian (270-275) are broadly similar. Thus, at least in a frontier provincial context on the continent, there are parallels for the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251) and Trebonianus Gallus (251-253) being the low point of coin circulation in the mid-third century.

After a period of recovery during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (253-258), the patterns of coin loss become divergent again. Though military sites in Southwest Germany

do not recover at any significant level, they notably do have a numismatic presence. At Transylvanian military sites, on the other hand, there is a complete disappearance of coinage from 260-270, after which it does not recover in any meaningful sense. Other site types also show catastrophic levels of coin loss in Transylvania, intimating that the inability of coinage to enter into the region was not limited to military sites. Heeren (2016, 194-195) has recently argued that low quantities of coinage should not be taken to mean a total depopulation of military sites in Southwest Germany, suggesting that they may have been reoccupied later on and citing the study of Brem et al. (1996) as a parallel. The latter study found a relative drop in coin circulation across various cities in the Roman Empire from 275-294, which correlates to Reece period XIV. While this pattern is seen across the entirety of Southwest Germany as a whole, the levels of coin loss at military sites are so miniscule as to make this this observation negligible. Additionally, there is little to no coin circulation in this period in Transylvania. This should not entirely discredit the possibility that military sites continued to be occupied, either detached from Roman administration or receiving payment in kind. Furthermore, it shows that the argumentation put forward by Heeren (2016) is not pertinent to the mid-third century.

As has been argued in earlier in this chapter in section 10.3, and in Chapter Nine, while the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab did not physically occur in Transylvania, they had a catastrophic effect on the ability of coinage to penetrate the region. Though there was a short period of recovery under Valerian and Gallienus, the damage had already been done and by 260 there was very little numismatic material entering the region. There is unfortunately no definitive event in Southwest Germany that would have had a clear effect on the ability of coinage to enter the region. While this is a pattern that is seen elsewhere in provincial frontier contexts, it appears that Transylvania was not able to recover. However, the inability of the Empire to get coinage to Southwest Germany and Transylvania, the only two regions in the Western Empire beyond the traditional fluvial boundaries set by Augustus, immediately before their abandonment is striking. Southwest Germany's immediate proximity to the Gallic Empire and the Central Empire meant that eventually, coinage would begin to seep back into the region, if indeed in small quantities. The relative isolation of Transylvania beyond the Carpathians meant that once the circulation of coinage had ceased, it would not be possible to resume it given the turbulence of the period.

10.4.3 Coin hoard data comparison

The purpose of examining period coin hoards was to assess their validity as evidence for supporting the narratives for each region. Studying patterns of coin selection and

accumulation was beyond the scope of this thesis, and as such there is not much comparative material to examine. There is a generally low number of hoards, with 30 in Southwest Germany and 28 in Transylvania (*tab 10.3*). This is critical in light of the few hoards that were found in excavation, and or fully recovered and identified. At fourteen, just under half of the hoards from Southwest Germany were fully recovered and identified. Only six of these also came from excavation, giving a context to the deposition. In Transylvania, the number was considerably lower; only two of the six hoards fully recovered and identified were found in excavation. Therefore, in both regions, this thesis argued that the suitability of coin hoards for narrating events in the mid-third century is flawed.

Hoard status	SW Germany	Transylvania
Hoards closing with Gordian III		
Fully Recovered/Identified	3	2
Not fully Recovered/Identified	1	7
Total	4	9
Hoards closing with Philip the Arab		
Fully Recovered/Identified	1	1
Not fully Recovered/Identified	3	8
Total	4	9
Hoards closing with Trajan Decius		
Fully Recovered/Identified	3	1
Not fully Recovered/Identified		1
Total	3	2
Hoards closing with Trebonianus Gallus/Volusian		
Fully Recovered/Identified		1
Not fully Recovered/Identified	1	2
Total	1	3
Hoards closing with Valerian/Gallienus Joint Reign		
Fully Recovered/Identified	2	
Not fully Recovered/Identified	3	1
Total	5	1
Hoards closing with Gallienus Sole Reign/Postumus		
Fully Recovered/Identified	4	
Not fully Recovered/Identified	3	3
Total	7	3
Hoards closing with Claudius II/Marius		
Fully Recovered/Identified	1	
Not fully Recovered/Identified	2	
Total	3	
Hoards closing with Aurelian/Tetricus I		
Fully Recovered/Identified		
Not fully Recovered/Identified	3	1
Total	3	1
Total number of hoards		
Fully Recovered/Identified	14	6
Not fully Recovered/Identified	16	23
Total	30	28

Table 10. 3: Mid-third century coin hoards in Southwest Germany and Transylvania

10.4.4 Epigraphic data comparison

Transylvania, with 70 examples, has roughly twice the amount of mid-third century inscriptions as Southwest Germany does with 38 (*tab 10.4*). Looking at the data, the epigraphic assemblages of both regions follow a pattern similar to the numismatic assemblages. There is a decline in the frequency of inscriptions beginning with the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251). The drop in frequency is more severe in Transylvania, though this is likely due to the high number of milestones that can be accurately dated in Southwest Germany, four of which date to the reign of Trajan Decius. Following this, inscriptions stay at very low levels in both regions, not reaching more than 5.7% of the overall regional assemblage under Trebonianus Gallus, the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus, or the sole reign of Gallienus.

Region	Military	Civilian	Milestone	Percentage	Total
Inscriptions from the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235-238)					
SW Germany	7.90%	5.20%	5.30%	18.40%	7
Transylvania		17.20%	1.40%	18.80%	13
Inscriptions from the reign of Gordian III (238-244)					
SW Germany	10.50%	13.20%	7.90%	31.60%	12
Transylvania	22.90%	15.70%		38.60%	27
Inscriptions from the reign of Philip the Arab (244-249)					
SW Germany	10.50%	5.30%	10.50%	26.30%	10
Transylvania	11.40%	15.70%		27.10%	19
Inscriptions from the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251)					
SW Germany	5.30%		10.50%	15.80%	6
Transylvania	2.90%	1.40%		4.30%	3
Inscriptions from the reign of Trebonianus Gallus (251-253)					
SW Germany					0
Transylvania	1.40%	2.90%	1.40%	5.70%	4
Inscriptions from the joint reign of Valerian/Gallienus (253-260)					
SW Germany			5.30%	5.30%	2
Transylvania	4.30%	1.40%		5.70%	4
Inscriptions from the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268)					
SW Germany		2.60%		2.60%	1
Transylvania					0
Totals					
SW Germany	34.20%	26.30%	39.50%	100%	38
Transylvania	43.50%	53.60%	2.90%	100%	70

Table 10. 4: Mid-third century inscriptions by percentages

These findings mimic overall trends for the Western Empire, which were first identified by Mrozek (1973, 114), and further confirmed by MacMullen (1982, 247). They concluded that the mid-third century, and specifically the reign of Trajan Decius, appeared to be the critical period when the epigraphic habit in the Western Empire reached its low point. Nonetheless, it

is striking that the frequency of epigraphic material dramatically drops at the same time as coin circulation in both regions. However, there should be caution in tying both phenomena together. The final two inscriptions from military contexts in Southwest Germany date from the reign of Trajan Decius. Six of the remaining seven are milestones, four from the reign of Trajan Decius, and two from the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus. The single inscription from a potential civilian context is a building inscription from Hausen ob Lonthal, dated broadly to the sole reign of Gallienus (CIL III 5933=IBR 202). The erection of these milestones would indicate that there was still investment in the region by the central authority, even if coinage was not circulating.

Likewise, only four of the eleven inscriptions in Transylvania that date from Trajan Decius or later come from civilian contexts. Despite the severe drop in coinage, especially at military sites, there remained the ability to erect epigraphic monuments. In fact, three of the four inscriptions dated to the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus come from Turda-*Potaissa*. These include two votive altars from the intramural bath house of the legionary fortress from the short-lived reign of Aemelian in 253 (AE 2012, 1215-1216; Piso 2014, 128 *contra* Bărbulescu 2012, 200-201) and an inscription commemorating the building of a temple in the *colonia* by the prefect of the *V Macedonica* in 256-258 (CIL III 875=ILS 4345). Thus, despite the temptation to tie the trends of the epigraphic assemblage to the same issues with coin circulation, Roman authority seems to have maintained some control over these regions until well into the 250s.

10.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to summarize the key findings of Parts Two and Three of the thesis, and then to identify any similarities between both regions in their final decades of Roman occupation. Each region appears to have gone through a period of transition over a number of decades, which culminated in their final cessation by the Roman administration. Furthermore, under scrutiny, the archaeological evidence does not fit into narratives that have guided the discussion for both Southwest Germany and Transylvania. What is clear is that it is highly unlikely that either region experienced large scale depopulation at the end of Roman rule. Nuances are clearer in the site records of Southwest Germany than Transylvania, though this is due more to the level of excavation, recording, and publication than the archaeology itself. Consequently, it was not possible to set an exact date range to this transition period via the site archives, and the only clear comparative phenomenon between both regions was the blocking of fort gates at military sites. However, the variation in blocking material, the usage

of the blocked space, and the choice of blocked gateways led to the conclusion that this should be seen as an *ad hoc* process with no clear similarities between either region.

Single coin finds from both regions provided the best dataset for comparative study. In looking at patterns of coin loss, it was found that both regions experienced a severe drop in coinage during the reigns of Trajan Decius and Trebonianus Gallus. Military sites seem to have been particularly affected in both regions. In general, other provincial frontier regions seemed to experience a similar drop in coinage during this period.

There was a gradual recovery outside of military sites in Southwest Germany beginning under the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus, with recovery continuing into the reign of Aurelian. In Transylvania, there was a complete fallout after a short recovery during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus. The difference is likely due to the immediate proximity for the Gallic Empire to the west and the Central Empire to east for Southwest Germany, while Transylvania's relative isolation meant that reintroduction of coinage was not possible. There appears to be no single cause for this fallout in Southwest Germany, compared to Transylvania where the effect of the nearby Carpic Wars permanently disturbed the flow of coinage into the region.

The epigraphic assemblage fits the general trend of the numismatic data, with a severe drop in frequency in the reign of Trajan Decius, most acutely seen in Transylvania. However, this is also indicative of larger trends across the Empire and as such should not be seen as an indicator of regional problems on its own. Indeed, some of the latest epigraphic evidence from both regions lends itself to the implications that Roman authority, by way of milestones in Southwest Germany, and legionary inscriptions in Transylvania, was still investing in the infrastructure of the regions after the first major disruption of the coin supply.

Together, the sum of these evidential parts further confirms that the final period of Roman rule in both regions should be seen as a culmination of a process that became untenable to sustain in the eyes of the Roman authorities, which reached critical mass in the 250s. Though there is no clear cause in Southwest Germany, there is more evidence that the Raetian part of the region was affected much more quickly than the sector in *Germania Superior*. In Transylvania, this was likely an aftereffect of the Carpic Wars of the late 240s. Thus, though the turning point appears to have been at a similar time, the events leading up to it and the effects afterwards are manifested in different ways in either region.

11. Concluding Remarks

Two decades ago, following his extensive survey of the Western Empire, Witschel (1999, 376-377) concluded that the notion of a ‘Weltkrise’ could not usefully be applied to conditions in the third century. He argued that it was unhelpful to blanket the whole Empire under a simplistic model given different factors that affected each region (Witschel 1999, 377). In pursuing its two key aims of testing the current narratives for the end of Roman administration in each region, followed by looking for similarities in the data for both regions, this thesis has worked through archaeological material from Southwest Germany and Transylvania, coming to a similar conclusion. This has in turn achieved the third aim of the thesis, to create an extensive foundation upon which to address individual aspects of the data in a more analytic fashion. Thus, even two regions that enter the third century relatively similar in terms of military dispositions and infrastructure, experience the instability of the period in notably different ways. The first aim was to question both current and historic narratives for the end of Roman control in frontier regions. The second was to see if there were any similarities in evidence between the regions that might indicate a pattern in the latest phases of Roman occupation. To achieve these aims, it was necessary to undertake a comprehensive reappraisal of the data, generating in the process a dataset of sufficient integrity and consistency to allow further study. The study has demonstrated that in most cases, existing archaeological narratives for the final phase of Roman occupation in these regions are built largely on an historical reading of the data. As such, they are not fully compatible with the evidence as it stands. Though widely varying levels of excavation and recording between both regions severely hampered comparative analysis, it has also been argued that both regions experienced a longer process of transition over the course of a few decades that culminated in the end of Roman rule rather than an abrupt and hasty abandonment.

The following section brings together the findings from each chapter. Next, a statement of impact is given to show how the work fits within the larger corpus of research. Finally, avenues for further study are given, first on a regional level for Southwest Germany and Transylvania, and then on a larger level.

11.1 General conclusions

11.1.1 Part One, Framing the Narrative

Before setting out to achieve the aims of the thesis, clear parameters needed to be set in order to place the study within the larger scope of research and to identify the problematic nature of

working with third century material, as well as the methodological issues specific to each region. This was executed in Part One. The reliance on the historical narrative in order to compensate for a lack of datable material culture in the third century was discussed in Chapter One. Some of the challenges faced by scholars of the third century have also been confronted by students on the late fourth-fifth century in Britain, namely challenges with dating material and notions of 'systems collapse'. Therefore, a brief comparison of key themes used for both periods was made to see how far theoretical approaches offered for the end of Roman Britain might be applicable. The suitability for the study of Southwest Germany and Transylvania as frontier zones that were eventually abandoned by Roman authority in the mid-third century for the study was argued. As frontier zones with an array of military and civilian sites with narratives that fed into recurring third century themes of barbarian invasion and administrative retreat, they provided ideal case studies to examine. Furthermore, though these themes play heavily in third century narratives, an in-depth analysis of these regions across site types was largely missing.

Once the case had been made for the study, it was necessary to work through the established narratives for each region. Chapter Two reviewed the historiographical background to the study, examining the evolution of thought in third century studies, illustrating a change in thought from 'crisis' to 'transition'. This was followed by sections on Southwest Germany and Transylvania. Each section detailed the literary evidence pertaining to the two regions before assessing how it had shaped the interpretation of the archaeological evidence. Notably, the consequence was a pattern of circular argumentation where the historical evidence supported the archaeological evidence, which in turn supported the historical evidence. It was also demonstrated that certain factors, such as a longstanding humanist tradition in Germany, and attempts to prove ethnic continuity in Romania have also had detrimental effects on the narratives. Despite the similarities, and the repeated observation of the potential for comparative study, little had yet been done to further investigate this avenue of research.

After highlighting the problematic nature of third century narratives, a discussion of the difficulties in dating and interpreting archaeological material was necessary to set a methodological framework. Chapter Three looked at the scope and limitations of the third century in general, and from the survey regions in particular. In general, due to the difficulty in dating finds from this period, most of the established narratives are based on the historical record. It was demonstrated that this creates a feedback loop in the dating of finds, creating a problematic scenario for understanding the archaeology of the third century. Methods of interpretation for the third century have thus normally employed numismatic and epigraphic

material. By nature, these are archaeological finds that give historic information (Millett 1981, 528-529). Consequently, in many cases archaeological site data has not been appraised with sufficient accuracy, necessitating reappraisal of the evidence.

The result was a general dating of most assemblages to the 'mid-third century'. In Southwest Germany, many of the sites that have been used to date finds were excavated over a century ago, and though the reworking of material has started to change interpretation, many established dates centred around 259/260 still remain. In Transylvania, finds work is still very much in its infancy, and this is largely due to the lack of stratigraphic excavation and the sporadic nature of publication of sites and site finds. Unless the find is imported or has external analogies, much of the material is given a 'Roman', i.e. second to third century date range. Given these problems, this thesis has adopted a different approach to the analysis of the material. An essential part of this approach is to track practices indicative of major transitions which are visible in the analysis of structural changes. Thus, indications of new construction work, demolition work, and the destruction of sites are studied in detail. The practice of hoarding is also examined, as it has been a crucial part of the argument for third century narratives. This reappraisal of structural archaeological work has then been set alongside a reconsideration of other source data, notably numismatic and epigraphic.

In working with the numismatic data, methodologies created by Reece (1995) and further developed by Walton (2012) to create regional means were adapted to the data. These methodologies have mainly been applied to British data to date, but as this thesis sought to demonstrate, they can also be applied to other provincial settings. To get a closer look at the coinage from the survey period, single finds were divided into 'regnal periods' based on the general chronology of mid-third century emperors. Likewise, the overall regional epigraphic assemblages were collated, and inscriptions divided by type and then chronologically by those that were not datable, those that were broadly datable, and those that were dated to a specific period.

With the parameters of the study established, work then could move onto achieving the first aim of testing narratives. Painstaking examination of the German and Romanian published site reports was followed by an assessment of the regional numismatic and epigraphic material in Part Two for Southwest Germany and Part Three for Transylvania. In both cases, stratigraphic evidence was generally lacking to fully support the narratives, though this is manifested in different ways.

11.1.2 Part Two, Southwest Germany

The interpretations for Southwest Germany, tested in Part Two, rely heavily on military sites, many of them excavated over a century ago. Thus, much the evidence used to support the established narrative comes from sites excavated before modern techniques, with assemblages largely divorced from their stratigraphic relevance. Nonetheless, the same sites and ‘dated’ assemblages have been used to reinforce the historical narratives of abandonment in 259/260.

Chapter Four discussed the evidence for these military sites. Eighteen of the 56 military sites available for study provided enough data to look at the extramural settlements and the forts separately in order to spot any significant differences between the two. Ultimately, the main differences in material were based on how long ago a site had been excavated and published. Working through the site reports, it was found that the narrative of the overrunning of the frontier by the Alemanni in 259/260, known as *Limesfall*, was no longer applicable. Despite first being posited over two centuries ago, it still holds a dominant place in the literature. At just over half, 28 sites displayed evidence of burning layers in the final phases of the site. However, for many of these, the explanation of accidental fire or intentional destruction by the garrisons as a tactical measure was just as likely as barbarian raiders or opposing troops in civil war. Moreover, most of these sites were excavated before modern practices were established. Recent arguments that the *Raetian* sector of the *limes* was destroyed in the Spring of 254 (Reuter 2007) were also questioned. Though the lack of coinage past this point makes the argument plausible at face value, it was found that this conclusion is based on data that in many cases lacks the clarity to make claims of such precision.

Although towns and rural sites provide clearer evidence for activity in the region in the mid-third century, this is still not fully incorporated into larger narratives. Chapter Five provided an in-depth look at these sites and the processes that occurred at them. Traditional narratives of unrest and destruction were challenged, notably through the examination of well deposition in towns. While the deposition of Jupiter columns into wells has been argued to be a specifically mid-third century phenomenon associated with either Germanic raiding or civil unrest, the evidence of second century deposition brought this interpretation into doubt. Furthermore, the presence of skeletal remains deposited in wells at town sites has also been argued to be evidence for raiding and destruction, but these remains are not associated with any other visible signs of destruction and can potentially be understood differently. In the case of Frankfurt-Schwanheim, the skeletal remains were part of what was a careful sequence of deposition. Due to research being from more recent excavations, the best evidence for the end of the Roman period comes from civilian sites both in urban and rural contexts.

Ultimately, the archaeological evidence indicated that a process took place over the last few decades of Roman rule in the region, which resulted in a pragmatic usage and repurposing of space, potentially as resources and manpower dwindled. However, there did not appear to be a uniform sense of evacuation or abandonment.

The regional numismatic and epigraphic assemblage for Southwest Germany was examined in Chapter Six, finding that both experienced a severe drop in quantity during the reign of Trajan Decius (294-251) and Trebonianus Gallus (251-253). Coinage recovered under the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (253-260), and continued on throughout the survey period, with more coinage circulating in towns than in military sites. While coinage continued to flow into the region, the assertion that it was due to the resettlement of Alemannic colonists by the Gallic Empire (Sommer 2014) did not appear to coincide with the archaeological evidence, which does not show extensive Alemannic settlement until the fourth century.

11.1.3 Part Three, Transylvania

The archaeological narratives for Transylvania were investigated in Part Three. Site data from the region is overwhelmingly divorced from its archaeological context and interpreted through a narrative derived from literary, numismatic, and epigraphic sources. Thus, the key themes of the narrative can neither be confirmed nor denied from the archaeological record.

In Chapter Seven, military sites in Transylvania were examined. Like Southwest Germany, this made up the largest and most extensively researched assemblage of sites. However, an emphasis solely on investigation of the forts and fortresses themselves meant that investigation of extramural settlement was not possible. Much of the activity was based on *termini post quem* for the construction of the stone forts in which they took place. The key exception to this was the inclusion of five inscriptions from the reign of Philip the Arab (244-249) and Trajan Decius (249-251) into the repair of a bastion at Moigrad-*Porolissum*.

Though there is no clear evidence for it in the archaeological record, activity at most of the forts was interpreted as the result of barbarian attacks. Consequently, burning layers were found at only four out of 31 military sites, and only three of these could be said with confidence to be associated with the final phases of occupation. Therefore, though little can be said with confidence, Hügel (2003, 142-145) and Isac (2008, 145-146) rightly point out that more than anything, these are signs of continuation of the routine upkeep and maintenance of the forts well into their latest phases of occupation. Whether this was an ongoing process into the advanced third century or evidence of single events was not perceptible due to the nature of the finds and the level of recording.

Evidence from civilian sites in the region provided even less detail, as no substantial surveys of the latest phases of Roman occupation in towns, let alone rural settlements, exist. Therefore, Chapter Eight attempted to derive evidence for activity from the published excavations of towns and rural settlements. Like the forts, there was no real discussion for the dating of mid-third century activity, other than stating it was mid-third century. However, across the larger towns in the region, large *domus*-type structures appear to be either constructed or repaired in the very latest phases of Roman occupation. Besides these, evidence for activity in towns was derived mainly from inscriptions, which indicated that civic life continued in one form or another into the late 250s, however the overall evidence is too poor to come to a further conclusion. Likewise, the evidence from rural sites was lacking in almost every aspect. Of the fifteen sites noted in reports to have been occupied in the mid-third century, only six offered any finds evidence in support of the claim, but none of these discussed the evidence in detail or context.

As noted, the received archaeological narrative for Transylvania has been derived entirely from numismatic and epigraphic evidence. Chapter Nine aimed to re-evaluate the claims scholars have derived from this evidence. First, that Transylvania was the main theatre in the Carpic Wars of Philip the Arab. Second, that the abandonment of the region either under the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268) or Aurelian (270-275). Hoarding evidence under Gordian III and Philip the Arab has traditionally been used to prove that Transylvania was the target of raiding by the Carpi. However, it was demonstrated that coin hoards were unsuitable to use as evidence, as only four of the eighteen hoards were fully recovered, and none came from excavation. Furthermore, a larger assemblage of hoards, as well as sites with clear burning deposits at the end of their occupation are known along the *limes transalutanus* south of the Carpathians. The presence of two inscriptions, one from *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* and one from the *municipium* at Alba Iulia-*Apulum* possibly mentioning events from the Carpic Wars need not indicate that the area was directly threatened, as *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* was the provincial capital and the seat of the provincial governor was at the *municipium* at Alba Iulia-*Apulum*. Even if these inscriptions do mention events associated with the Carpic Wars, therefore, they do not prove that the region was at risk. Both towns were widely networked and events much further afield could well have been commemorated in the epigraphy.

The opening of a regional mint, issuing coins with the legend *Provincia Dacia* from the years 246-257, has also been tied to the Carpic Wars due to its beginning under Philip the Arab, though there is no direct link between the campaigns and the coinage. However, the volume

of minted coins drops considerably after Philip the Arab. In general, both coin circulation and epigraphic data see a severe drop beginning with the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251) through Trebonianus Gallus (251-253). Though there is a short recovery under the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (253-260), there is a complete cessation of coinage at military sites from 260-270, and very minimal quantities at towns and in rural contexts, which does not recover. Thus, this thesis argued that while there is no archaeological evidence for any fighting or destruction in Transylvania that can be linked to the Carpic Wars, these wars certainly disrupted coin supply to the region. Furthermore, at least from a financial perspective, the narrative that the Empire had started to lose control of the region, beginning during the sole reign of Gallienus (260-268) now seems likely.

11.1.4 Part Four, Conclusions

Finally, in Part Four, Chapter Ten gave general conclusions for the evidence from both regions before undertaking comparative analysis. For Southwest Germany, it was found that the processes in the region that led to its downtown and eventual abandonment was the culmination of a process that took decades to unfold. Numerous factors, whether they be economic, natural, the displacement of troops in eastern campaigns, and/or occasional raiding, manifested itself in a reorganization of space at both military and civilian sites, both on the frontier and in the hinterland which led to the eventual withdrawal of Roman administration. Though the reintroduction of coinage into the region beginning in the mid-250s would point to the fact that the region was unlikely to have been depopulated. While sporadic raiding was probable, it was definitely not the main culprit for the end of Roman control.

For Transylvania, despite the lack of nuanced data, some general conclusions could be made. At both military sites and in towns, there appeared to be a continuation of normal practices during the mid-third century up until the mid-250s. This might have even lasted until the very end of the province and perhaps beyond. Finds would seem to support this (Diaconescu 1999), but levels of archaeological recording are not sufficient to allow deductions to be made as to the longevity of 'Roman' cultural style in the province. Although there was no evidence for Transylvania being the main theatre for the Carpic Wars, there is no doubt that these wars had an effect on the economy of the region, perhaps cutting the area off from the rest of the Empire temporarily after the wars devastated the sub-Carpathian region of *Dacia*. This is visible through the drop in coinage under Trajan Decius which continued under Trebonianus Gallus. An almost complete cessation of coinage under Gallienus, however, would support the idea that the region was at least starting to slip out of the Empire's financial control by the 260s.

Comparative analysis of the site records beyond a basic association with mid-third century dating was not possible, due to the widely varying level of excavation, recording, publication, and finds work between the two regions. However, the phenomenon of blocking fort gates appears to occur in both regions during the mid-third century. Furthermore, neither region displays evidence for any kind of ordered evacuation or wholesale abandonment following the end of Roman rule.

The numismatic and epigraphic assemblages allowed more in-depth comparison, which showed both regions fell victim to similar problems with coin circulation during the reigns of Trajan Decius and Trebonianus Gallus. While the drop in coinage had an affect across all site types in both regions, it was most acutely felt at military sites. Recovery was sustained in Southwest Germany, but was only temporary in Transylvania, with coinage all but disappearing, namely at military sites from the sole reign of Gallienus onwards. This may be due to the more lasting effects that the Carpic Wars in Transylvania as well as south of the Carpathians. However, the evidence that a financial crisis in two frontier regions shortly before their abandonment by Roman administration may point to more nuanced issues from an inability to get coinage to the military, to problems with taxation and the circulation of coin. This evidence is further bolstered by the severe drop in datable epigraphic material beginning with the reign of Trajan Decius in both regions. While there may indeed be a correlation with the lack of coinage, this also fits in with general trends in the epigraphic habit of the mid-third century established by Mrozek (1973, 116).

11.2 Impact

There have been relatively few studies that focus strictly on the archaeology of the third century since Witschel's (1999) survey. Purely archaeological studies of the Roman West during the transition and into Late Antiquity do devote some attention to the third century in order the frame the larger study, but by design the coverage is secondary to later periods (Reece 1999; Esmonde Cleary 2013). While ancient historians and philologists have attempted studies of the period, there are no essays in archaeological interpretation that focus purely on the third century. What few monograph-size archaeological studies that do exist are results of colloquia. A small handful of these deal with the archaeological evidence of the period, most notably Schatzmann et al. (2011) and Brassous and Quevedo (2015). These proceedings include papers that focus on transition in urban environments. More generally, however the proceedings of other colloquia tend to cover a broad range of topics, the focus of which include a mixture of archaeological and ancient history studies (Johnes et. al. 2006; 2008; Fischer 2012). Thus, it is hoped that this thesis provides a starting point for discussion

in archaeological interpretation on a regional and provincial level of this very difficult period. Furthermore, the dataset accumulated will ideally provide the building blocks needed to conduct further analytical research in these two frontier regions.

On a regional level, the thesis builds off work that began to question the validity of the *Limesfall* narrative in Southwest Germany. This truly began with the unfortunately unpublished thesis of Lawrence Okamura (1984). Though largely focused on ancient texts and coin hoards for evidence, Okamura was the first scholar to thoroughly question the circular argumentation of the regional narrative. He was followed by Stribrny (1989) with a thorough examination of the numismatic profile of the region from 250 onwards. Further interdisciplinary colloquia addressed the issue beginning with Kuhnen (1992a), and after the discovery of the Augsburg Victory Altar, with Schallmayer (1995; 1996). Much of the work in this thesis on Southwest Germany, however, is built on the foundations of the recent few, yet nonetheless important archaeological studies of the final phase of Roman occupation in the region. These include studies of the *limes* by Scholz (2006; 2018) and Reuter (2007; 2012; 2015), and syntheses by Reis (2010, 271-274) and Heising (2014) on the end of Roman towns, and the general study by Witschel (2011) of *Germania Superior* during the third century.

Though recent studies have raised methodological issues with regard to the mid-third century in Southwest Germany (Heising 2010; 2015a; Heeren 2016), Part Two of this thesis is the first time that all the published archaeological sites with mid-third century activity for the region have been worked through and assessed (Appendix A). This is also the first study to correlate all the numismatic data for the region in a usable database, with individual coin identification for all single finds from Gordian III to Aurelian (238-275). The hope is that on a regional level this will spur discussion about regional narratives as pertain to all site types and create a foundation to understand the transitional period of the mid-third century more fully.

In Transylvania, the focus of discussion has generally been on the theme of continuity, though instead of focusing on the transition period at the end of Roman rule, the emphasis has been on evidence from the fourth through sixth centuries (Protase 1966; 2000; Horedt 1982; Diaconescu 1994; 1999; Diaconescu et al. 2006; Gudea 2011; Gudea and Ghiurco 1988; Wanner and De Sena 2010). While the basis of research into the end of the Roman period has mainly been numismatic in nature, focusing on coin circulation (Macrea 1941; Alföldy-Găzdac and Găzdac 2004; 2005; Găzdac and Alföldy-Găzdac 2008; Găzdac 1998; 1999; 2002a; 2004) or the distribution of coin hoards as relates to the historical narrative (Winkler

1971; Pavel 1976; 1996-1997; Petac 1998-2003; Ardevan et al. 2003; Găzdac 2012; Găzdac et al. 2015). The sole monograph-length work on the final period of Roman occupation is Hügél's (2003) study of the final decades of Roman *Dacia* from the reign of Trajan Decius (249-251) to Aurelian (270-275). While this study was the first to critically engage with the material from Transylvania and question the established narratives, it is unfortunately relatively unknown due to its publication in Romanian and difficulty in obtaining the monograph. However, Hügél's work inspired Isac (2008) and later Matei (2012; 2015) to assess the evidence for activity at military sites in the second half of the third century. These three studies remain the only purely archaeological surveys of material from this period in the region. Due to the low resolution of the data, there are unfortunately no other studies on either towns or rural settlements during this period. Thus, like Part Two with Southwest Germany, Part Three is the first time that all published sites with evidence for mid-third century activity have been collected and analysed forensically (Appendix D). While this is not the first time that the numismatic data for the region has been catalogued in an easily-accessible form, it is the first time that complete identifications for each single coin find from Gordian III (238-244) to Aurelian (270-275) have been collated (Appendix E). Consequently, this study will hopefully open up some of the more inaccessible parts of the Transylvanian dataset to audiences further afield who may not have had access to it before.

11.3 Further research

This thesis has shown that existing narratives do not fit the archaeological evidence. Thus, there is great potential for further work in the subject in order to distil narratives mainly from the archaeology. While the historical record should not be completely ignored, it should not be the driving factor in interpretation. It will be clear from this thesis that further research in both Southwest Germany and Transylvania as well as Empire-wide third century contexts, is needed. The data gathered here shows the potential for further analysis, but how might this be best taken forward?

Many of the problems with archaeological interpretation in Southwest Germany are centred on the reliance on sites excavated before modern techniques. Finds assemblages from these sites, if reworked with material from modern studies might in many cases display possible evidence for later occupation than previously thought. Heeren (2016) had demonstrated the possibility for this at Niederbieber, Zugmantel, Saalburg, and Pfünz. However, by his own admission, many of the finds did not conclusively push the dating of these sites any later, but demonstrated the possibility that reinterpretation of finds on a site by site basis could have (Heeren 2016, 201-203). Indeed, in the past few decades, reworking of finds from older

excavations has been the emphasis of study at military sites, notably Saalburg (Moneta 2010; 2018), Dambach (Selke 2014), Weißenburg (Grönke 1997), and Ellingen (Zanier 1992). The reworking of finds assemblages for each site was beyond the scope of this thesis, due to the sheer volume of data that had to be examined in order to assess the evidence. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that this would be a rewarding project. The ceramic assemblage from Niederbieber (Oelmann 1914) has been the focus of recent critique. This has resulted in the recalibration of the dating of some forms into the late third and beyond into the fourth century on evidence from further afield at Mainz, Krefeld-Gellep, and Nijmegen (Heising 2007; Heeren 2016). Use of the database to identify important sites with outdated assemblages, such as Holzhausen (Pferdehirt 1976), Butzbach (Müller 1968), Osterburken (Schumacher 1895), and the fort at Rainau-Buch (Herzog 1898).¹⁶⁴ With a reworking of the finds assemblages with larger and modern datasets, the results could also be used to conduct more qualitative studies, opening the door to theoretical research on the assemblages, such as has been done with the finds from earlier phases of the auxiliary fort at Ellingen and the first-century legionary fortress at Rottweil (Allison 2007; 2013).

In addition to the reworking of finds, the importance of dendrochronological dating in the region has been noted by Kortüm (1998, 61-63) and Reuter (2012, 320-322). Though there are few published dates that are germane to this thesis, there is undoubtedly unpublished data that may give further evidence for activity in the mid-third century. The last time a collection of published dates for the Roman period was compiled was in Kortüm's (1998, 61-63) study, over 20 years ago. Therefore, a general collection of the current assemblage could help to underscore the importance of these dates. In terms of excavation strategy, dating available timber samples from the latest phases of Roman occupation on sites may also help to push the dating forward in ways that finds on their own cannot.

Further research in Transylvania is hindered by the lack of stratigraphic excavation and complete publication of sites. The piecemeal nature of the regional assemblage means that it will be some time before the archaeological evidence will be able to facilitate further analysis. There has nonetheless been forward movement in dating ceramic assemblages, with Rusu-Bolindeț' (2007) extensive work on the finds from Cluj-Napoca, and the work of Ciaușescu (2006; Ciaușescu and Gligor 2006) on Severan assemblages from the legionary fortress at Alba Iulia-*Apulum*. The discovery of a ceramic assemblage in the extramural settlement at Vețel-*Micia* from a sealed context with coinage of Philip the Arab also appears to be

¹⁶⁴ The extramural settlement has been the focus of modern research at Rainau-Buch (Seitz 1999; Greiner 2008), however the fort has not.

promising in helping identify later vessels if thoroughly published (Gamureac 2014). Recent finds studies also attempt to place regional assemblages within their wider context and look for analogies further afield, such as Mustață's (2017) study on bronze vessels from *Dacia Porolissensis*. Furthermore, there are signs that the level of investigation and publication of archaeological sites is changing. The establishment of a commission dedicated to the research of the *limes* in Romania, and the subsequent publication of excavation monographs under the series *Studii asupra Granițelor romane din Dacia* are positive signs. These indicate that the current generation of Roman archaeologists understand the importance of full publication of excavations in a monograph format in order to convey the entirety of the archaeological narrative. However, until these practices become more widespread, little more than basic commentary of the archaeological evidence, especially for the mid-third century, will not be possible.

On a wider scale, the methodology employed in this study can be expanded to include other regions for comparative study. Prime candidates would be the inclusion of other frontier regions that were either abandoned in the mid-third century, such as the sub-Carpathian region of *Dacia*. Furthermore, abandonment of a region need not be necessary to push the narrative forward. Indeed, by comparing evidence from areas that experienced problematic issues that are thematic to the third century would be ideal comparanda for further research. A frontier region that was not abandoned but nonetheless experienced an apparent depopulation, such as the Lower Rhine (Heeren 2015), or the Rhineland Palatinate which supposedly fell victim to widespread barbarian invasions (Heising 2015b) would provide apt comparisons to see if similar patterns of activity are seen across parts of the Empire that stayed intact.

Ultimately, this thesis has proven that a better understanding of the archaeology of the third century is only possible by confronting the problematic nature of the data head on. Only by embracing the difficulties in interpreting this period and working with them in contexts further afield may this dark period become illuminated.

