
Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia (Romania) No 1718

1 Basic information

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia

Location

Alba County
Argeş County
Bistriţa-Năsăud County
Braşov County
Caraş-Severin County
Covasna County
Cluj County
Harghita County
Hunedoara County
Mehedinţi County
Mureş County
Olt County
Sălaj County
Sibiu County
Teleorman County
Vâlcea County

Brief description

Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia is a serial nomination of 277 component parts along an intensely militarised mixed frontier property traversing over a thousand kilometres of diverse landscapes. It has been operational for nearly 170 years from 106 to 271 CE and represents the longest land border and the most complex frontier of a former Roman province in Europe. The frontier of the Dacian Limes is defined by a network of individual sites of different types, including legionary fortresses, auxiliary forts, earthen ramparts, watch towers, temporary camps and secular buildings. Dacia was the only Roman province located entirely north of the Danube River. The frontiers protected Dacia from 'barbarian' populations as well as controlling movements and securing access to valuable gold and salt resources.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of 277 sites.

Included in the Tentative List

31 January 2020

Background

This is a new nomination.

The nomination occurs within the context of a programme of cooperative efforts to nominate sites of the frontiers of the Roman Empire in coherent segments. An overall nomination strategy for the European frontiers of the Roman Empire was finalised in 2017, with the participation of ICOMOS. The World Heritage Committee took note of the Thematic Study in Decision 41COM 8B.50. The nomination strategy proposed that one segment could be nominated to represent the Roman province of Dacia in present-day Romania. The strategy proposes that each segment should constitute a separate World Heritage property with different attributes and expressions of Outstanding Universal Value.

Hadrian's Wall (United Kingdom) was inscribed in 1987 and was extended to include the Upper German-Rhaetian Limes (Germany) in 2005 and Antonine Wall (United Kingdom) in 2008 to form the property known as Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1987, 2005, 2008, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)). Two further segments were inscribed in 2021: Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes (Western Segment) (Austria, Germany, Slovakia, 2021, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)), and Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Lower German Limes (Germany, Netherlands, 2021, criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)).

Consultations and technical evaluation mission

Desk reviews have been provided by ICOMOS International Scientific Committees, members and independent experts.

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the nominated property from 7 to 21 August 2023.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

A letter was sent to the State Party on 4 October 2023 requesting further information about the selection of component parts; inclusion of existing World Heritage properties; potential development pressures; private ownership; conservation; tourism, visitor management and interpretation; reconstructions, modern visualisations and vertical buffer zones; legal protection; management plan; archaeological research plan; and monitoring.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 9 November 2023.

An interim report was provided to the State Party on 19 December 2023, summarising the issues identified by the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel.

Further information was requested in the interim report on: evidence and arguments about cultural interchange; boundaries and buffer zones; management system; interpretation strategy; General Urban Plans; and Heritage Impact Assessment.

Additional information was received from the State Party on 28 February 2024.

All additional information received has been incorporated into the relevant sections of this evaluation report.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

13 March 2024

2 Description of the nominated property

Note: The nomination dossier and additional information contain detailed descriptions of this property, its history and its state of conservation. Due to limitations on the length of evaluation reports, this report provides only a short summary of the most relevant aspects.

Description and history

From 500 BCE onwards, the Roman Empire extended its territory across parts of Europe and North Africa. The Roman Frontier lasted for a millennium in the west, and two millennia in the east. The frontiers of the Roman Empire were at their maximum expansion in the 2nd century CE, reaching a length of more than 7,500 kilometres, and featuring a range of defensive structures across many environments. Taken together, these frontiers mark the extent of the empire and constitute a complex monument to Roman civilisation. Segments of the frontiers established in different periods have been inscribed in the World Heritage List as tangible manifestations of the ambitions of the Roman Empire to dominate the known world, creating complex interactions of cultures.

The Dacian Limes is the longest and most complex frontier segment in Europe and represents the frontier of the only former Roman province located entirely north of the Danube River. It extends 500 km north of the Danube and delineates the western, northern and eastern border of the province.

The Dacians were ancient Indo-European inhabitants of the area located near the Carpathian Mountains and west of the Black Sea in present-day Romania. Along with the Parthians of ancient Iran, the Dacians were an important foe to the Romans, and there was considerable conflict within the contact zones between the Danube and Dacia. Under Emperor Trajan, Rome conquered the Dacian Kingdom of Decebalus after two wars (101-102 and 105-106 CE), involving thirteen-fourteen Roman legions and approximately 150,000 soldiers. The Dacian Frontier was part of the Roman Frontiers from 106 to 271 CE. Within this 170-year history, there are several chronological phases of the Roman province of Dacia, based mostly on the fortunes of various conquests and conflicts elsewhere. The Roman occupation of Dacia was relatively short and included a rapid transition from military occupation to province. Its defence required a large military force to keep the 'barbarian' threats at bay and to secure access to important natural resources such as gold and salt.

In the 3rd century CE, sustaining the province became untenable, and it was renounced in c.270-275 CE by Emperor Aurelian who withdrew the Roman army and administration. The Roman frontier again reverted to the

Danube. The military installations and associated sites of the Dacian Limes disappeared from sight in the Middle and Modern Ages, and most sites were used as meadows, agricultural fields or forests, or were built over.

The nominated property comprises 277 component parts across more than a thousand kilometres of lines of defence. The nominated component parts illustrate the establishment, development, and operation of the most complex frontier sector of a Roman province, incorporating diverse landscapes including forested mountainous areas, open lowland plains and river courses. Coupled with the dynamic military context of the conquest and occupation of Dacia these required a range of responses in order to secure the province.

In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party confirmed that five of the nominated component parts are included in the already-inscribed World Heritage property Dacian Fortresses of Orăştie Mountains (Romania, 1999, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv)). These are component parts 8.5.1-2 Cioclovina-Ponorici (cluster); 8.8 Grădiştea de Munte-*Sarmizegetusa Regia*; 8.10 Grădiştea de Munte-Muncel; and 8.12 Costeşti-Grădişte. This is a serial property of six Dacian fortification sites that were later conquered by the Romans, and therefore have a different justification for Outstanding Universal Value than the current proposal. The State Party has indicated that a minor boundary modification will be submitted in 2026 for some component parts of the earlier inscription, along with a Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS notes that, initially, 285 component parts were nominated by the State Party, but in the additional information submitted in February 2024, a number of boundaries and buffer zones were revised, with changes to the overall number of component parts (now 277). The numbering of the component parts in this evaluation report has been updated accordingly.

The area of the 277 component parts totals 1,491.20 ha, with buffer zones totaling 14,197.46 ha.

For the purposes of the nomination, the Dacian Limes has been divided into seven sectors, each characterised by a mixture of specific elements that were deployed in direct response to the nature of the physical terrain that was crossed. An eighth sector comprises the temporary camps in the Şureanu mountains that relate to the military campaign of conquest. Combined, the eight sectors form a single unified system that gives this frontier its unique character.

The component parts represent all aspects of this frontier system, military and civilian, and reflect how the Romans adapted their policies and strategies to the specific characteristics of this frontier. The Dacian Limes is defined by a network of individual sites of different types, including legionary fortresses, auxiliary forts, earthen ramparts, watch towers, temporary camps and secular buildings.

The State Party has provided an outline of the different categories of fortifications, their geographical distribution, and their chronology. An annex to the nomination dossier provides details of each of the 277 component parts, including: photographs, plans and aerial maps showing the boundaries, buffer zone and key features; description; area, ownership and number of inhabitants; protection status; attributes; ratings for integrity, authenticity, and factors affecting the property; presentation and access; sources; and community involvement.

The Dacian Limes begins at the Lower Danube, heading north into Transylvania and the Carpathian Mountains, then east and south to encompass the Transylvanian Plateau. From there, it continues southwards along the Olt River to link back to the Danube River. The Dacian Limes follows the inner edge of the Carpathians which were mostly excluded from the Roman province, except for the gold mining area of Roşia Montană, inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2021.

Sector 1 (south-western *limes*) consists of seventeen component parts (in three counties) from the course of the Lower Danube River as a fortified imperial road heading north from the river with two parallel routes. The eastern segment became the main artery after Trajan's reign.

Sector 2 (western *limes*) consists of sixteen component parts (in three counties), mostly forts that mark the frontier from the fortified imperial road, offering protection to the areas where salt and gold were extracted.

Sector 3 (north-western *limes*) consists of ninety-one component parts (in two counties), with a dense network of watchtowers and fortlets that protected fertile lands and a key access route in and out of the province.

Sector 4 (northern *limes*) consists of seventy-six component parts (in three counties), including a line of watchtowers and fortlets to encompass the Transylvanian Plateau and salt quarries, controlling the east-west communication route along the Someş River.

Sector 5 (eastern *limes*) consists of twenty-five component parts (in three counties) in a mountainous area which used the eastern Carpathians to provide a degree of natural protection, along with auxiliary forts around the most important mountain passes.

Sector 6 (*Limes Alutanus*) crosses the lowlands of Muntenia and consists of seventeen component parts (in five counties), a fortified route along the Olt River.

Sector 7 (*Limes Transalutanus*) consists of nineteen component parts (in five counties) that connects back to the Danube River.

Sector 8 is a cluster of marching camps and includes sixteen component parts (in three counties) located at high altitudes along mountain ridges. This element of classical Roman warfare represents the dynamic frontier

during the wars of conquest as it advanced towards the Dacian fortresses in the Şureanu Mountains.

Only the western and eastern nodes of the southern border of Dacia are part of the current nomination, as the remaining extent that follows the river forms part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Danube Limes, on the Tentative Lists of Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia.

State of conservation

Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is generally good, although there are a number of issues affecting individual component parts. The State Party has provided a detailed annex that describes the state of conservation and pressures for each component part.

The majority of the nominated component parts are below-ground archaeological sites in rural contexts. Buried archaeological remains are generally in good or excellent condition. Agricultural cultivation could have an impact on some component parts where archaeological remains are close to or exposed at the ground surface (eg. 1.9 Teregova, 4.9.1 Ilişua-Arcobara, 7.12 Afrimeşti-Urluieni, 7.14.2 Roşiorii de Vede). Some component parts have protective structures in place, such as 2.4 Alba Iulia and 1.13 Sarmizegetusa.

Structural remains (usually stone walls) have been exposed at a number of component parts. Many of these sites were excavated, conserved, and consolidated in the 1960s and 1970s using techniques and materials that are no longer considered suitable. Regular maintenance has not been undertaken in all of the component parts. For these reasons, although many component parts appear stable and in relatively sound condition, others require active conservation. Past stone robbing has also affected the condition of some component parts.

Most earthwork component parts are in good condition, although vegetation management is a problem for some sites, requiring regular maintenance and monitoring (e.g: 1.8 Mehadia-Praetorium, 4.5 Căşieu-Samum/Cetăţele, 6.8.1 Racoviţa-Praetorium II, 7.12 Afrimeşti-Urluieni). Some earthworks have suffered from severe erosion from vehicle access tracks, and other are friable and vulnerable to various pressures such as tourism or forestry (eg. 2.3 Geoagiu-Băi, 2.5 Ighiu, 3.5.18 Treznea-Sub Pastaie, 3.9 Porolissum, 4.9.1 Ilişua-Arcobara/Vicinal, 7.1 Breţcu-Angustia).

A number of component parts exhibit deterioration requiring remedial action as a matter of some urgency (eg. 1.10 Tibiscum, 1.13 Sarmizegetusa, 2.2 Cigmău-Germisara, 2.3 Geoagiu-Băi, 2.8 Turda-Potaissa, 3.1 Bologa-Grădişte, 3.9 Porolissum, 4.9.1 Ilişua-Arcobara, 6.12 Păuşa-Arutela, 6.13 Stolniceni-Buridava romană, 6.16 Corabia-Sucidava).

Factors affecting the nominated property

Because of the large number of component parts and their diverse landscape contexts, there are numerous factors that could potentially affect parts of the nominated property. Based on the information provided by the State Party and the observations of the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission, ICOMOS considers that the main factors affecting the nominated property are building and development pressures (particularly transport infrastructure) and agricultural cultivation.

In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party provided a summary of all approved and current developments occurring within the nominated component parts and their buffer zones. The State Party considers that there are no significant threats.

In urban and peri-urban areas, commercial and residential development is a factor with past and potential future impacts on the nominated property to a minor or moderate extent. In many cases, the Roman archaeological materials are under layers of post-Roman settlement that provide a layer of protection. These are regarded as vertical buffer zones (e.g. 1.5 Berzovia, 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 2.4.1-2 Alba Iulia).

Infrastructure development is a factor for some component parts. For example, 6.12 Păușă-*Arutela* may in the future be affected by changes to the Turnu dam. In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party has described hydro-power developments since the 1970s and confirmed that there are no further developments of this kind that are likely to impact on the nominated component parts.

The State Party considers that pressures from transport infrastructure exist for sectors 1, 3, 6 and 7, and ICOMOS notes that a number of component parts have been impacted in the past by the construction of roads and railways. At 2.1 Vețel-*Micia*, mitigation is underway in advance of the construction of a high-speed train line. Any future plans for new roads or railways will be subject to the restrictions of state and national heritage laws and the regulations of the spatial planning process.

ICOMOS notes that two component parts (6.8 Racovița, 6.9 Copăcenii) are exposed to threats due to the construction of the A1 Trunk Road Scheme that cannot be fully avoided. In the additional information received in February 2024, the State Party provided details about the design solutions that have been implemented to reduce the risk as far as possible, ensuring the protection of the archaeological materials. The State Party acknowledges that there will be an unavoidable impact on the visual settings of these component parts. The State Party also advised the withdrawal from the nomination of one component part in sector 6 due to the significant and unavoidable impact of the A1 Trunk Road project. The remains of the Roman road in this former component part will be protected through its listing as a historical monument. ICOMOS regrets the necessity for the

withdrawal of this component part, but understands the rationale for this decision by the State Party.

Many of the component parts and their adjacent buffer zones are under some form of agricultural cultivation. Generally, there is no deep ploughing, although there are still some instances of damage to the archaeological sites (for example, at 7.14.2 Roșiorii de Vede-Valea Urlui). The State Party considers that agriculture and forestry are potential pressures in most sectors to a minor to medium extent. However, ICOMOS notes that there is little or no monitoring, and that crop rotation means that impacts could change. For these reasons, the cumulative impact may be underestimated. These factors are challenging to manage and monitor due to the multiple ownership arrangements. Many component parts are also situated in wooded areas, and are vulnerable to uprooting of trees, felling, and the impacts of forest management including vehicle access tracks. ICOMOS considers that inter-agency cooperation and improved monitoring is needed as a high priority for areas under cultivation or forest management.

Large-scale resource extraction has occurred in the past near component part 7.8 Câmpulung-Jidova, and the State Party considers that sectors 3, 4 and 7 are exposed to resource extraction pressures to a minor extent. In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party confirmed that no resource extraction will be allowed within the boundaries of component parts and would be subject to strict requirements if proposed in the wider settings. There is an existing quarry in the buffer zone for component part 3.9 *Porolissum*.

A number of component parts receive relatively high numbers of visitors (1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 1.10 *Tibiscum*, 1.13 Sarmizegetusa, 2.4 Alba Iulia, 2.8 Turda-*Potaissa*, 3.1 Bologa-Grădiște, 3.4 Buciumi-Grădiște, 3.9 *Porolissum*). While existing visitor infrastructure at some component parts is dated and inadequate, ICOMOS considers that future visitor pressure is not a significant risk for the foreseeable future.

Environmental pressures potentially affect most of the sectors and include the impacts of climate change and severe weather events. Component parts located near rivers could be vulnerable to flooding, although assessments by the State Party indicate that the risks from flooding to buried archaeological materials is minimal. Some component parts have been subjected to natural erosion and landslip in the past (e.g. 1.8 Mehadia-*Praetorium*, 1.9 Teregova-La Hideg, 1.11 Zăvoi-*Agnaviae*, 6.4 Cincșor-Cetate), although these potential impacts are now well-managed.

Past stone robbing and looting has impacted some component parts (e.g. 1.6 Brebu-*Caput Bubali*, 1.10 *Tibiscum*, 3.5.3 Buciumi-Coasta Ogrăzii 1, 3.5.17 Treznea-Cărbunarea, 3.5.18 Treznea, Zalău-Sub Păstăie, 4.1.5 Surduc-Deasupra Văii Hrăii). ICOMOS notes this is no longer an issue. There is evidence of some continuing illegal metal detecting and off-road

biking that require improved monitoring and enforcement (eg. 3.3 Meseş 1 cluster, 3.5 Meseş 2 cluster, 4.1.1 Tihău-Grădişte. 4.9 Ilişua-Arcobara), although this is not considered to pose a serious threat.

ICOMOS notes that the pressures that have been identified for each component part are well identified and controlled at the local level. The factors affecting the nominated component parts are outlined in a concise table and are itemised for each site in the “Component parts” annex.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is generally good and that the factors affecting the nominated property have been well identified by the State Party. The key factors are development pressures (particularly transport infrastructure), and agricultural cultivation.

3 Proposed justification for inscription

Proposed justification

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The unique nature of Dacia as single and relatively short-lived addition to the Roman Empire north of the Danube, the longest land border of the frontiers in Europe protecting a single province.
- The complexity and variety of different elements of the frontier system with an unparalleled mixture of military responses to different natural and political conditions.
- The distinctive characteristics of the frontier due to the mixture of landscape types including mountainous areas and passes, high plateaux, low plains and river major courses.
- The well-preserved traces of different types of military installations in varying combinations incorporating long and short linear barriers that correspond to different mountain and river topographies.
- The variety of military responses to different terrains that also fit into a single unified system, giving the whole a unique character.
- The evidence from the settlements associated with the frontier which illustrate the social and economic impact of the Roman way of life on the peoples living in the region.

Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes that convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value include the design, layout and siting of the network that established the frontiers; and the structures, earthworks and artefacts associated with the period of the Roman occupation of Dacia.

Comparative analysis

The nomination is based on the thematic framework and nomination strategy developed in 2017. It provides the basis for considering different segments of the Roman frontiers in Europe for nomination to the World Heritage List and recommended that the frontiers of the Roman province of Dacia (Romania) could be nominated as the only segment that does not have a transboundary extent because of the specific historical phase that it represents. Although the thematic study focused on the segments in Europe, it also established a common framework that could be extended to properties in other regions.

The State Party has set out its analysis on the basis of the proposed values and attributes, the justification for criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), and the conditions of authenticity, integrity, and state of conservation. The nominated property is compared with other Frontiers of the Roman Empire inscribed in the World Heritage List and included in Tentative Lists, namely: Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1987, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv)); Frontiers of the Roman Empire–The Lower German Limes (Germany, Netherlands, 2021, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv)); Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes (Western Segment) (Austria, Slovakia, Germany, 2021, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv)); Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Ripa Pannonica in Hungary (Hungary, Tentative List); Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Tentative List); Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Tunisian Southern Limes (Tunisia, Tentative List); and Archaeological site of Ghirza (Libya, Tentative List).

The State Party also notes others in sea or desert frontiers such as the Parthian Frontier, the Limes Mauretaniae (Algeria), Limes Arabicus (Syria), the Numidia frontiers, Cyrenae and Africa Proconsularis, and frontiers in Cappadocia, Egypt, and Arabia. These are not considered in detail due to important differences in their landscape contexts.

For much of Europe, the frontiers were based on the Danube and Rhine Rivers, with some land-based sections; and in Great Britain, the frontiers were built in stone and turf. The Dacian Limes is clearly distinct from the riverine frontiers and is the longest Roman land border sector in Europe, extending over a thousand kilometres, reflecting the mountainous landscape. While there are various similarities with other constructed linear segments of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire, the Dacian Limes demonstrates a complexity and clarity of design of the defensive system, due in part to its relatively short timeframe and the high degree of exposure to attack. The frontiers include a wide range of Roman defensive features and structures that established a complex defence system capable of responding to diverse topographic landscapes, demonstrating the capacity of Roman engineers. Some site types are relatively rare or unrepresented in other segments of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire, such as watchtowers and temporary mountains camps, as well as the frequency of fortlets and towers. The landscape settings of many component parts

remain relatively unaffected by land use changes and development, allowing the strategic uses to be comprehended.

The selection of component parts was based on the 2017 Thematic Study. The State Party clarified in November 2023 that discrepancies between the Thematic Study and the submitted nomination are due to the intensified research that has occurred since the Thematic Study was completed. Sites were selected from the full inventory on the basis of their ability to convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Considerations included the potential to illustrate the linearity of the frontier, the mix of elements characteristic of each sector, the variety and density of frontier elements, and evidence of the phased establishment and operation of the frontier. In the additional information submitted in November 2023, the State Party also listed sites that were removed from consideration on the basis of poor integrity, authenticity, or protection issues, or because of significant levels of reconstruction.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. The use of the serial approach is justified, and there is a clear rationale provided for the selection of component parts.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv). These are the same criteria as the other segments of Frontiers of the Roman Empire already inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Dacian Limes demonstrates interchanges between the Roman Empire and other peoples at the height of the Roman Empire. This is demonstrated in the extension of Roman military architecture and technical know-how to the edges of the Roman Empire, imposing the frontier system on the existing societies. The establishment of a complex frontier system controlled the movements of civilians, military units and merchants, triggering multiple exchanges.

The State Party provided additional information in February 2024 that deepened the justification of this criterion. Evidence of cultural interchange can be understood as occurring at the frontier (contact between Romans and the 'barbarians'); the interior of the province where local populations encountered the new rulers; the rapid arrival of colonists from many parts of the Roman Empire; and in the evidence drawn from religious and secular architecture, monuments, art, technology, inscriptions, landscapes and material culture in military/defensive and civilian settlements.

ICOMOS considers that the inter-cultural exchanges of the Roman Frontier are implicit in all inscribed segments of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire, based on the evidence derived from the rich archaeological record that relates to different cultural contexts. There were intense conflicts between the Dacians and Romans prior to the conquest of Dacia and the establishment of the province, and a number of component parts demonstrate both Dacian and Roman fortifications and military technology, showing some adaptations to each of them. The frontier had a profound influence on the ways of life in the region, and the Dacian Limes demonstrates these interchanges in specific and distinctive ways. These include the Dacian influences on the development of Roman military architecture and technologies, and border sites such as *Porolissum* demonstrates trade and cultural interchange. There is also ample evidence in the surviving architecture and material culture of cultural interchange within and between diverse communities within the Dacian Province, although unlike other segments of the frontier, there is limited evidence of a merging of local Dacian and Roman cultures. This is possibly a reflection of the rapid creation of the colonising infrastructure compared to the longer processes of acculturation that occurred elsewhere.

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that, together with the other major segments of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire, the Dacian Limes segment is an exceptional testimony and physical manifestation of the power and imperial strategies of the Roman Empire at its maximum extent demonstrating Roman colonisation of territories.

ICOMOS considers that the Dacian Limes is an exceptional testimony to the operations of the Roman Empire. The frontier represents the furthest extent of Roman imperial policy in Europe and the expansion of Roman culture to the area north of the Danube. The defence system is the manifestation of Roman policy and ambition to dominate the known world. The diverse architectural and artefact assemblage supports and illustrates this significance.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Dacian Limes is a remarkable example of Roman military defensive architecture, demonstrating the sophistication of the responses to specific topographical and strategic conditions across more than a thousand kilometres. This is the largest segment of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire in Europe and features various types of fortifications and natural barriers that functioned during a significant period of the history of the Roman Empire.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated component parts provide a coherent representation of the defences of a Roman province, and demonstrate Roman military planning, architecture, and technology.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets cultural criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the nominated serial property is based on the rationale for the selection of the component parts, their ability to convey the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, and the intactness of the material evidence of the selected component parts. The intactness of the individual component parts and of the series as a whole, the state of conservation, and the way major pressures are managed are determinants of integrity.

The State Party has provided a concise set of tables to demonstrate the integrity of the nominated component parts with a scoring system to classify integrity assessing the degree of wholeness (presence of relevant attributes), intactness (state of preservation), and the severity and exposure to threats. Acknowledging that the physical evidence of the defence system consists of extant remains/ruins (mainly foundations and low structures) and below-ground archaeology, their completeness is judged on average to be good or very good. Similarly, intactness is also judged to be good or very good, and able to represent all of the stages of the active development phases of the frontier. Detailed analyses of the component parts indicate that there has been relatively little exposure to natural and anthropomorphic effects.

The State Party considers that the requirements of integrity have been met for the serial nomination on the basis of the ability of the component parts to demonstrate the complexity and operations of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia. While some component parts have been impacted by various pressures, these are actively managed. The completeness of underground archaeological remains is high, and the overall state of conservation is good.

The selection of the component parts of the series is based on a method that takes into consideration the representativeness of different types of fortifications on the Dacian Limes, and the different landscape contexts. ICOMOS considers that the method applied to the consideration of integrity is sound, and that there is a clear rationale for the selection of the 277 component parts. Archaeological records, site inspections, and non-intrusive surveys have established the extent and physical condition of each component part, and this has also resulted in a good overall understanding of the impact of deterioration processes and exposure to threats at many of the sites.

During the evaluation procedure, ICOMOS suggested that the boundaries of a number of component parts and/or buffer zones should be adjusted to strengthen their integrity. In February 2024, the State Party advised that all of these suggestions were reviewed and the majority have been implemented. For the two component parts where the State Party considered the suggested changes to be impractical, ICOMOS has reviewed the rationale provided for these decisions, and agrees that they are valid. ICOMOS considers that the responsiveness of the State Party to these suggestions should be commended.

In most cases, exposure to threats appears minimal. Where more significant pressures are identified, appropriate mitigation measures are in place or being developed. Some of the component parts have been subjected to archaeological investigation in the past that has resulted in the destruction of at least a portion of the archaeological deposits. Others were partially destroyed by natural processes such as river erosion and landslips (e.g. 1.9 Teregova-La Hideg, 1.10 *Tibiscum*, 6.4 Cincșor-Cetate, 6.9 Copăceni-*Praetorium I*, 6.12 Păușa-*Arutela*).

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the requirements for the integrity of the whole series as well as the integrity of each of the component parts have been met.

Authenticity

The State Party has provided a concise set of tables to demonstrate the authenticity of the nominated component parts, each sector, and the serial property as a whole. This includes evaluation of the degree of modification to the form and design of the individual component parts, the degree of retention of materials from the Roman period, and the degree of change in the landscape settings over time.

The authenticity of the nominated serial property is based on the burial of the selected component parts soon after the Roman period, protecting them from later alterations. The archaeological excavations and non-invasive research methods have documented the presence of Roman remains, sometimes with complex chronologies. The rural landscape contexts of many of the component parts has meant that the settings have not experienced significant changes.

There are reconstructions and visualisations at some of the nominated component parts, with some negative impacts on authenticity. At some sites, larger scale reconstructions have provided visitors with a sense of the monumentality of the structures (eg. the customs post at 3.9 *Porolissum*, 6.12 Păușa-*Arutela*, 7.8 Câmpulung-Jidova). The reconstructions generally reflect outdated approaches, with the new materials set on original *in situ* footings and foundations (other than 2.4 *Alba Iulia* which has been completed to high contemporary standards). In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party confirmed that no further reconstructions will be approved.

Because the reconstructed elements provide a degree of protection to the original materials, the State Party refers to these as “vertical buffer zones”. In the additional information provided to ICOMOS in November 2023, the State Party notes that this approach and terminology has been used at other segments of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire. However, ICOMOS considers that the usefulness of this approach should not be over-emphasised, given the detrimental impacts on the authenticity of the affected sites.

While the conservation standards applied in the past have been inadequate in some respects, current approaches are sound. Where courses of masonry have been restored or capping layers have been added as a protective measure, these are usually easily distinguished from the original fabric, although this is not always the case for older works (e.g. 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 2.3 Geoagiu-Băi, 3.4 Buciumi-Grădiște, 3.9 *Porolissum* and 6.16 *Corabia-Sucidava*).

A number of component parts have undergone extensive modification as a result of subsequent changes in land use including for interpretation and display (e.g. 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 1.10 *Tibiscum*, 3.4 Buciumi-Grădiște), but these still essentially retain their authenticity, and none have been so altered or damaged that their authenticity is severely compromised.

Post-depositional processes have degraded stone walls at a number of component parts, and in a number of cases the condition of exposed remains is clearly deteriorating and requires reburial or active remedial conservation. Emergency conservation measures are now being developed for component parts at most risk and are detailed in the management framework.

For the component parts in upland or mountainous areas, there are clear views looking out over original landforms, retaining a high degree of authenticity in the location and setting, and most component parts allow the strategic setting of the sites to be understood. For some, the immediate setting is compromised by modern urban or peri-urban settings (e.g. 1.3 Vărădia-Chilii, 1.5 Berzovia-Berzobis, 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 1.11 Zăvoi-Agnavia, 2.1 Vețel-Micia, 2.4.1-2, Alba Iulia-Apulum, 5.2 Orheiul Bistriței, 5.14 Sărățeni, 6.16 *Corabia-Sucidava*, 7.2 Boroșneu Mare).

ICOMOS considers that the Dacian Limes demonstrates a high degree of authenticity, due in part to the relatively short lifespan of the frontier and the relatively undisturbed rural locations of many of the component parts. Since most of the areas in which the frontier component parts are located are lightly populated, the authenticity of the landscape setting for most component parts is considered to be high.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

Boundaries

In February 2024, the State Party informed ICOMOS that the number and configuration of a number of component parts, their boundaries, and/or buffer zones have been changed in response to suggestions made by ICOMOS in its interim report. Accordingly, some aspects of the nomination dossier have been updated as indicated in the annex to the additional information submitted in February 2024.

According to the nomination dossier, there were approximately 4,770 inhabitants in the nominated property (in sectors 1, 5, 6 and 7), and approximately 39,703 inhabitants in the buffer zones. There is both public and private ownership across the 277 component parts.

The delineation of the boundaries and buffer zones for the nominated component parts has been guided by various considerations, including existing administrative or property ownership boundaries; topographic contours or features; present-day developments; and the known or high potential for Roman archaeological remains. There are differences in the way that some parts of an ensemble may be included in a component part and other related parts in the buffer zone. This is in part due to the level of available information and to the practicalities of managing multiple private plots in built up areas.

Most component parts are buried archaeological sites and various methods were used to determine the areas with substantial remains and high archaeological potential. Results of previous archaeological excavations were combined with non-intrusive geophysical investigations to assess the extent of survival of buried structures. In more difficult and forested areas, LiDAR scanning was used to determine the exact location and the overall layout of fortifications, supplemented by site visits and visual assessments.

In the additional information received in February 2024, the State Party indicated that the boundaries and buffer zones of several component parts have been extended as per the suggestions from ICOMOS to include areas with urban development, roads and rail lines to more coherently reflect the Roman period structures and sites. It is considered that these changes strengthen the integrity of these component parts, with benefits for the management, protection and interpretation.

Most of the suggestions made by ICOMOS were implemented by the State Party during the evaluation procedure, although there were several component parts where it was not possible or practical to do so due to the impacts of past development (eg. 2.1 Vețel-Micia and 6.14 Reșca-Romula).

The State Party also revised the boundaries of several component parts on the basis of ICOMOS suggestions to ensure that areas of extra-mural settlement are potentially preserved within modern settlements. At other locations, the extent of the extra-mural activity outside forts has not

been confidently established and larger buffer zones have been provided, particularly in rural contexts.

Buffer zones have been defined for all nominated component parts. The key purposes are to protect important views and settings by controlling development, safeguard areas with related archaeological potential, and sustain spatial linkages between sites in clusters where possible. In some areas, shared buffer zones have been established for clusters of component parts in order to strengthen the coherence of the group of surviving elements of a single historical site or to link watch towers and fortlets to specific landscape elements.

Some buffer zones might include elements of component parts that have been destroyed by erosion, development, or previous excavations, or where the immediate surrounding of the component part has been overbuilt and development pressure remains high. A number of the buffer zones are relatively large in relation to the size of the component parts in order to include key landscape features and views that contribute to an understanding of their role in establishing the frontier. Finally, in some cases it was not considered to be necessary or practical to provide buffer zones that fully encircle all related component parts.

Buffer zones generally overlap with the legally defined protection areas. The responsibility for the administration of protection measures in the buffer zone lies with the county and municipal administrations.

Overall, ICOMOS considers that the approaches that guided the State Party in delineating the boundaries and buffer zones are acceptable. The boundaries are appropriately delineated and the buffer zones provide enhanced protection to the attributes of the nominated component parts. ICOMOS appreciates the spirit of collaborative engagement with the State Party that allowed many improvements to be made to the boundaries and buffer zones.

Evaluation of the proposed justification for inscription

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated serial property for the World Heritage List, and that the nominated serial property meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv). The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, and the boundaries and buffer zones are appropriately delineated.

4 Conservation measures and monitoring

Documentation

The National Limes Programme has included the development of a comprehensive database which contains all the available information for each component part. In addition, field surveys, archaeological and documentary research, non-invasive investigations, aerial photography, and LiDAR were used to supplement existing information about the nominated component parts. All the nominated component parts have been fully inventoried, described, and documented to a high standard and to a common format as part of the nomination process and this provides an excellent baseline for future work. National records and inventories include the List of Historical Monuments, and the National Archaeological Record (RAN).

An annex to the management framework received in February 2024 provided a detailed overview of previous research. Extensive archaeological investigation and research into the Roman period have been undertaken in Romania, and many of the nominated component parts have been well researched. Published and unpublished material related to the different sites and elements of the Dacian Limes is spread among national institutions, museums, and universities over many different locations. Museums holding collections of important archaeological finds have been identified, and the State Party has indicated that, as part of the longer-term management system, museum databases for the most significant materials relating to the nominated property will be incorporated into the overarching inventory.

The use of geophysical surveys has been on an *ad hoc* site-by-site basis in response to specific issues rather than as a coherent programme (as has been the case for the other segments of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire).

A staged development of a research strategy is detailed in the management framework, including priorities for archaeological and landscape research. In addition, the action plan includes the development of a digital online tool to enable researchers, site managers and stakeholders to access and contribute to data about the component parts. This will be developed over the next five years based on the GIS database that has been set up for monitoring.

Conservation measures

Conservation measures reflect the diversity of the selected component parts and have been programmed on a site-by-site basis. Past conservation works are documented for each component part, and the priorities for future work are outlined in the management framework received in February 2024.

There are also provisions for training for conservation professionals; adoption of a methodology for the conservation and maintenance of the component parts and for emergency conservation interventions; and an

effective and properly regulated monitoring and maintenance regime. Significant funding is provided through the National Limes Programme and the National Programme for the Systematic Archaeological Research as well as European Union funding sources. National Recovery and Resilience Plan projects demonstrate contemporary conservation principles and techniques.

Many component parts include the exposed remains of structures that were restored to a lesser or greater extent between the 1970s and 1990s using methods and techniques that are now outdated (eg. 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 1.10 *Tibiscum*, 1.13 Sarmizegetusa, 8.8 Grădiştea de Munte-Sarmizegetusa Regia, 2.1 *Micia*, 2.2 Cigmău-Germisara, 2.8 Turda-Potaissa, 2.9 Gilău-La Castel, 3.4 Buciumi-Grădişte, 3.9 *Porolissum*, 7.8 Câmpulung-Jidova, 6.12 Păuşa-Arutela, 6.14 Stolniceni, and 6.16 Corabia-Sucidava). Many of these are in relatively good condition but some require fairly urgent remedial attention. In addition, the authenticity of some elements has been diminished due to past conservation works that are not always distinguishable.

Ongoing work with high standards is exemplified by the conservation and restoration of elements of the city wall at 2.4 Alba Iulia and projects at 3.4 Buciumi-Grădişte, 3.9 *Porolissum* and 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin. ICOMOS notes that contemporary conservation principles and techniques are utilised, although there is a backlog of conservation work that is being addressed by the action plan in the management framework. In the additional information received in February 2024, the action plan indicates that a conservation strategy and methodology will be completed in one or two years, followed by the development of conservation standards in the following years.

ICOMOS considers that these actions are important and could be accompanied by an expansion of the database (Annex 3, "Component parts") to identify conservation issues and record conservation interventions.

Monitoring

The monitoring arrangements are briefly outlined by the State Party. These primarily involve visual inspection of the component parts by the National Museum of Transylvanian History, the National Museum of Romanian History, the National Museum of the Eastern Carpathians, and the National Heritage Institute. The results are collated by the National Limes Commission. There is an emphasis on monitoring the state of conservation and identifying trends. A pilot monitoring project will be initiated to test the effectiveness of the process. In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party acknowledged that the monitoring system requires further development within the management framework and oversight by the UNESCO Organising Committee.

ICOMOS notes that the monitoring of the nominated property has yet to be fully implemented. ICOMOS considers that it would be advisable that the monitoring system be established as a priority, ensuring that all

proposed attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are included. ICOMOS also recommends that the further elaboration of the monitoring system is designed to integrate the outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

5 Protection and management

Legal protection

The State Party has outlined the national legal framework for the protection of the heritage and the different mechanisms for implementing heritage protection measures at a national, county, and municipal levels through the strategic and local spatial planning processes. In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party confirmed that the legal protection applies equally to land in public and private ownership.

All nominated component parts are protected by national laws. The key national laws are Government Order no. 43/2000 on the protection of archaeological heritage, and the Law 422/2001 on the protection of historic monuments. All the archaeological sites within the nominated component parts are protected through their inclusion in the National Archaeological Record (RAN). Government Order no. 47/2000 adopts special measures for the protection and management of heritage places included on the World Heritage List and Tentative List to maintain their existing or potential Outstanding Universal Value. The State Party has advised in the nomination dossier that 58,6% of the nominated component parts are also protected through their inclusion in the National List of Historic Monuments. In November 2023, the State Party advised that the listing procedures were initiated by the National Institute of Heritage in collaboration with the relevant counties and the National Limes Commission in 2023 and should be completed by the end of 2025. Due to the large number of owners, this process can be time consuming. However, all sites are already fully protected through their inclusion in the RAN. In the additional information received in February 2024, the action plan for the management framework indicated that there 122 component parts requiring listing, 114 component parts requiring updating, and 33 requiring further details.

The nominated component parts and buffer zones are also protected by legislation for spatial planning, and urban planning. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring the protection of historical monuments and archaeological heritage on public or private land and must register the relevant areas in territorial and urban development plans. Any development in these areas is subject to the provisions of laws and regulations related to urban planning, development, and construction. For natural protected areas, forests, water bodies, and agriculture, all registered designations and protected zones must also be incorporated in the General Urban Plans. Relevant General Urban Plans have to be updated within twelve months of inscription in the World Heritage List to include the nominated component parts and buffer

zones, as well adapting existing provisions and regulations to the needs of maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS notes the importance of the General Urban Plans for the protection of the nominated component parts. The overarching protection status provided by this mechanism has not yet been effectively applied in all component parts. A national funded programme is in progress to update the remaining General Urban Plans. In the additional information received in February 2024, the State Party advised that only 31.6% of the General Urban Plans are still outdated and not yet in progress (although ICOMOS is unaware of whether these are areas which are priorities for this nomination). All should be completed in 2026.

Laws for the environment (including Emergency Ordinance No. 236/2000 regarding the protected areas, conservation of natural habitats, flora and fauna) and laws for forestry and water (Laws 107/1996, 46/2008, 137/1995 and Government's Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2007) are also relevant for component parts and buffer zones located inside nature reserves and protected areas. These areas have management plans which can include heritage protection as well as providing financial and human resources.

Private owners have a legal duty to maintain and protect historic monuments and archaeological sites and to comply with all relevant regulations for their protection. Owners can benefit from certain tax reductions.

ICOMOS considers that the national laws provide adequate long-term protection of the nominated component parts and appropriate levels of protection in the buffer zones through the systems for spatial planning. Where the General Urban Plans have yet to be revised in light of the potential World Heritage obligations, these should be completed as soon as possible.

Management system

The State Party established a new management system in 2021 that identifies roles for the Ministry of Culture, county councils, the National Institute of Heritage and the National Limes Commission. In accordance with Romanian laws, a UNESCO Organising Committee will be established to coordinate across these responsibilities and will be inclusive of a broad range of stakeholders.

The National Limes Commission is a management system key stakeholder and is responsible for the coordination of research activities and the scientific components of integrated management and monitoring. The county offices of the Ministry of Culture provide coordination of initiatives for conservation. The National Museum of Transylvanian History, The National Museum of Romania's History, and the National Museum of the Eastern Carpathians all exercise strategic roles in the implementation of the National Limes Programme funded by the Ministry of Culture since 2016. The State Party

recognises the need to increase administrative and institutional capacity for conservation.

A number of nominated component parts have received European Union funding for rehabilitation and conservation programmes (eg. 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 1.13 Sarmizegetusa); and funding through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan has supported various conservation and site amenity facilities for others (eg. 1.13 Sarmizegetusa, 2.9 Gilău-La Castel, 5.13 Călugăreni-Cetate, 6.12 Păușa-*Arutela*, 8.8 Grădiștea de Munte-*Sarmizegetusa Regia*).

The State Party participates in the international scientific advisory body which shares knowledge and experience of Roman frontiers and their identification, protection, conservation, management, and presentation (the Bratislava Group). The Bratislava Group provides a proven and effective mechanism to share practical experience and promulgate common management standards and approaches within the framework of different national administrative structures and legal systems.

The system relies on the establishment of a management plan (management framework) and annual action plans that will be prepared by the UNESCO Organising Committee. The management framework provides the basis for the long-term sustainable management of the nominated property as a whole, and a general framework for the effective management of the individual nominated component parts. The management framework was received in February 2024. It has sections oriented around three key management themes: research, conservation and enhancement; factors affecting the property; and tourism, visitor management and interpretation. The monitoring arrangements are outlined, and an action plan is provided. It will come into operation once the nominated property is inscribed.

Additional information provided by the State Party in November 2023 identifies conservation issues and current projects and future actions within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Local authorities must draw up annual plans for the management and protection of historic monuments that are inscribed on the World Heritage List and ensure that these are properly monitored. These annual plans are developed with the support of the National Institute of Heritage and are approved by the Ministry of Culture.

Individual management programmes valid for periods of five to ten years are drawn up by the National Institute of Heritage and approved by the Minister of Culture, on the proposal of the National Commission of Historical Monuments and, in the case of archaeological sites, of the National Commission of Archaeology. Few of the nominated component parts currently possess a formal management plan, although individual site management plans for each component part or cluster will be developed with the relevant county and/or municipal administration

as part of the implementation of the management framework. In order to facilitate this work by local administrations, the National Institute of Heritage will develop a pre-defined structure and guiding document. The individual management plans are expected to be completed over the next five years (some priorities are identified in the action plan for the management framework).

Due to the rural landscape contexts of many of the nominated component parts, the State Party is currently working to develop appropriate mechanisms within the regimes for agriculture and forestry that will support their protection. A strategy is being developed by the Ministry of Culture and the National Institute of Heritage to protect component parts that are used for agriculture by creating subsidies and zones that remove the land from intensive agricultural uses and/or adopt less potentially damaging crops. The State Party intends to establish an inter-ministerial committee on this issue and has advised county councils to ensure that the associated regulations are included in the urban plans.

In relation to component parts located within forests, the State Party is working to ensure that the forest protection legislation is revised to take into consideration historic monuments and archaeological sites. Local forestry administrations have been advised to develop mechanisms to ensure that forest operations avoid damage to archaeological features through use of heavy machinery and other felling techniques. Further negotiations between the National Institute of Heritage, the national forestry administrations and relevant county councils will be needed to activate these measures.

ICOMOS notes that the management system could be further strengthened by stronger inter-agency cooperation with clear protocols, and overarching management plans for forests and agriculture. These inter-agency policy changes require high-level inter-ministerial cooperation, capacity building and effective engagement with affected owners and communities. The further enhancement of the monitoring system will need to consider how to include these inter-agency arrangements and the impacts of rural land uses on the long-term state of conservation.

There are a number of active research and excavation projects at nominated component parts conducted by different institutions. In the additional information received in November 2023 and February 2024, the State Party provided further details about the research strategy for the Dacian Limes being developed by the National Limes Commission as part of the future implementation of the management framework.

At this stage, there are no formal provisions for Heritage Impact Assessment. In the additional information received in February 2024, the State Party briefly updated its efforts to introduce formal provisions for Heritage Impact Assessments. A commitment to Heritage Impact Assessments is indicated in the management framework. The *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* (2022) is being translated into

Romanian for use in capacity building. The State Party also advised that Heritage Impact Assessments will be included in the legal framework, although there is no information about the specific mechanisms or timeframe.

The State Party has conducted a risk assessment for all the nominated component parts, sector by sector, including risks from climate change, severe weather events, flooding, earthquakes and landslides, and fire events. There is an ongoing national process for identifying contingency provisions and methodologies. ICOMOS considers that the risks have been well identified. In the management framework submitted in February 2024, the State Party indicated that disaster risk management will be included in the individual component part or cluster management plans.

ICOMOS considers that the management structure is capable of addressing the necessary articulation between national, county and municipal stakeholders. However, most key components of the management system have yet to be developed and/or implemented. Given the scale of the nominated property, this is a significant concern. In addition, ICOMOS considers that the articulation between the individual nominated component parts and the overarching management framework should be strengthened.

Visitor management

Tourism strategies are developed at the regional and municipal levels. The management framework submitted in February 2024 contains updated information about visitor management, interpretation and sustainable tourism. A tourism strategy and interpretation framework will be developed in the next one or two years.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan aims to create employment in rural areas by supporting local tourism investments. As part of this, work to improve the promotion and interpretation of key sites has been supported as part of programmes for the Route of the Roman Forts and Fortress Route (eg. 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 1.10.1 Jupa-*Tibiscum*, 1.13 Sarmizegetusa, 2.1 Vețel-*Micia*, 2.2 Cigmău-*Germisara*, 2.5 Ighiu-Dealul Măguliței, 2.6 Trămpoiești-Grohașu Mic, 2.7 Războieni, 2.9 Gilău-La Castel, 3.1 Bologa-Grădiște, 4.9.1 Ilișua-*Arcobara*, 5.13 Călugăreni-Cetate, 5.19 Sânpaul, 6.7 Titești-Dealul Cazanului, 6.12 Păușă-*Arutela*, 6.16 Corabia-*Sucidava*, 8.8 Grădiștea de Munte-*Sarmizegetusa Regia*).

On-site visitor facilities and interpretation is variable across the large number of component parts and landscapes. In the management framework submitted in February 2024, the State Party indicated that there are seventeen component parts with existing interpretation that requires updating, and that there are eighty sites with no interpretation that have been prioritised for new site interpretation in the next three to four years.

Some component parts have large numbers of visitors (eg. 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 1.10 *Tibiscum*, 1.13

Sarmizegetusa, 2.4 Alba Iulia, 2.8 Turda-*Potaissa*, 3.1 Bologa-Grădiște, 3.4 Buciumi-Grădiște). In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party has indicated that several of these are expected to have small or medium increases in tourism levels. However, many others are in remote rural locations with very few or no visitors at all, and access is difficult for component parts located in mountain regions. Few sites have good visitor data (the figures in the nomination dossier have been updated in the management framework submitted in February 2024).

Some interpretation installations and panels are well designed (e.g. 3.9 *Porolissum*, 2.4 Alba Iulia, 5.13 Călugăreni-Cetate, 8.8 Grădiștea de Munte-*Sarmizegetusa Regia*); but others are dated or in poor condition.

An interpretation framework is currently being developed, and interpretation and presentation plans will be developed for all nominated component parts. In November 2023, the State Party advised that this is due for completion in 2024.

At a small number of component parts different techniques have been deployed to visualise and interpret below ground remains. These include marking out the location of features such as by using contrasting paving (e.g. 2.4 Alba Iulia), or differential planting (eg. 5.13 Călugăreni-Cetate). At 2.8 Turda-*Potaissa* more substantial visualisations in modern materials are being used to give a three-dimensional impression of shape and space. At a few component parts other aids to visualisation have been used (such as 5.20 Ocland-Cetatea Hășmașului). Digital content to be delivered by a mobile phone app is being developed for 8.8 Grădiștea de Munte-*Sarmizegetusa Regia*. In the additional information received in November 2023, the State Party has advised that additional visualisation installations are planned at a limited number of component parts (eg. 1.13 Sarmizegetusa, 3.1 Bologa-Grădiște, 2.8 Turda-*Potaissa*, 5.13 Călugăreni-Cetate, 6.12 Păușa-*Arutela*, 8.8 Grădiștea de Munte-*Sarmizegetusa Regia*). ICOMOS considers that these require Heritage Impact Assessments before they are installed.

A number of component parts are associated with museums with benefits to the interpretation (eg. 1.7 Drobeta-Turnu Severin, 1.10 *Tibiscum*, 1.13 Sarmizegetusa, 2.4 Alba Iulia, 2.8 Turda-*Potaissa*, 6.16 Corabia-*Sucidava*, 7.8 Câmpulung-Jidova).

ICOMOS notes that a more coherent approach to interpretation needs to be established through the implementation of the management framework. In addition, future development of component parts as tourist attractions should be assessed in light of their carrying capacity, and in the context of a coordinated visitor strategy across the whole of the Dacian Limes.

Community involvement

A brief overview concerning community involvement has been provided by the State Party, including consultations that occurred during the preparation of the nomination. The State Party acknowledges that there has been a focus on local institutional stakeholders (such as county councils and municipalities) and that more could be done to encourage wider participation.

This is challenging to address in a singular way given the large number of component parts and landscape contexts, and the diversity of social and administrative contexts that are involved. ICOMOS therefore recommends that the State Party develop appropriate mechanisms to enhance the community involvement aspects of the management system, possibly on a sector-by-sector basis. Additional information provided in February 2024 identifies the need to develop capacity building, and suggests the roles of different structures within the management system where this can be advanced.

Effectiveness of the protection and management of the nominated property

In summary, ICOMOS considers that the legal protection for the nominated component parts is adequate. Formal provisions for Heritage Impact Assessment should be established as a priority, along with needed capacity building. A number of important elements of the management system have yet to be established or fully implemented. The management framework includes the development of strategies for research, tourism and interpretation. This will form the essential basis for the development of well-coordinated individual site management plans and actions plans. The ongoing efforts at inter-agency coordination and enhanced community involvement are also important priorities.

6 Conclusion

The conquest and operation of the Roman province of Dacia is an important part of the history of the Roman Empire in Europe. The nomination of the 277 sites to represent the Dacian Limes adds a distinctive and significant complement to the existing segments of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire inscribed in the World Heritage List. The 2017 Thematic Study prepared in support of an overall nomination strategy for individual segments of the Roman frontiers has provided a sound basis for the comparative analysis and the selection of component parts.

This is an ambitious project, and the State Party should be commended for the thorough documentation work that has been done to develop this nomination. ICOMOS considers that the justification for selecting the 277 component parts in eight clusters is coherent, and that the nominated component parts demonstrate the range of functions and structures that created the frontier delineating the Dacia Province.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv). The authenticity of the nominated component parts as well as the whole series is generally high and the integrity of the individual component parts and of the whole series is good. All the attributes needed to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property are included in the boundaries. The buffer zones provide an appropriate additional layer of protection to the component parts.

Noting that the nominated component parts occur within diverse modern contexts that include forests, agricultural lands, and urban and peri-urban areas, ICOMOS considers that the potential threats are varied, but have been comprehensively identified by the State Party. Overall, the main threats to the nominated property are considered to be development, new infrastructure projects and agriculture. Tourism does not pose a significant pressure at present. There are some shortcomings at some component parts related to the current state of conservation and limited on-site interpretation. The State Party has identified these and incorporated a number for resolution in its management framework. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan has also incorporated a number of key projects for addressing conservation and interpretation issues at a number of key sites.

The State Party has shown a commendable responsiveness to the issues raised by ICOMOS during the evaluation procedure. In particular, the boundaries and/or buffer zones of a number of component parts have been adjusted, creating a much more coherent basis for their long-term protection, management and interpretation.

The legal protection is adequate since all component parts are listed in the National Archaeological Record (RAN). The process of designation of all component parts as national historic monuments will be completed by the end of 2025. The locally administered spatial planning process is an important part of the legal protection and management. While this is well established, the General Urban Plans for some municipalities require revision as a priority.

ICOMOS considers that the main issues of concern at this stage relate to the early stages of development of critically important aspects of the management system for the serial nominated property. Implementation of the management framework will enable completion of the strategies for tourism, interpretation and archaeological research, and the introduction of formal provisions for Heritage Impact Assessment.

ICOMOS considers that all development projects within the nominated serial property and buffer zones, including interpretation facilities, modern visualisation structures or features, infrastructure improvements and all other planned constructions that may affect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property, must be subjected to a Heritage Impact Assessment to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on the

proposed Outstanding Universal Value, integrity and authenticity of the nominated property.

7 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia (Romania) be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of **criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia extended for more than a thousand kilometres along the western, northern and eastern borders of the Roman province of Dacia, from the Danube River on each end, and encompassing the Transylvanian Plateau and crossing the lowlands of Muntenia along the Olt River. It was part of the Roman frontiers for nearly 170 years, protecting it from 'barbarian' populations, ensuring the supervision and control of their movements at the northern fringes of the empire, and securing access to valuable gold and salt resources.

Dacia was the only Roman province located entirely north of the Danube River. The diverse landscapes and topography of the Dacian province include mountains, forests, valleys, plateaus, lowlands and river courses. A complex system was established with a wide range of military installations, including temporary camps, networks of watchtowers, artificial barriers (earthworks, walls), small fortifications, auxiliary forts and legionary fortresses, with their associated civilian settlements. Based on these formal characteristics, seven sectors of the frontier are evident (both land and riverine) and were integrated into a unitary border, an unparalleled situation in other sectors of the Roman *limes*. An eighth sector contains a cluster of high-altitude marching camps.

Established at the beginning of the 2nd century CE, with the conquest and annexation of the Dacian kingdom, the frontier of Dacia did not survive the late 3rd century crisis of the Roman Empire. It was officially renounced c.270/275 CE, when Emperor Aurelian withdrew the Roman army and administration from Dacia. The relatively short time that the Roman frontier of Dacia functioned was nevertheless eventful. The constant pressure on the border is reflected by its characteristics and evolution. It also prominently illustrates the extraordinary capacity of the Romans to adapt to the local topography and use it to their advantage.

Criterion (ii): The extant remains of Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia constitute significant elements of the Roman frontiers in Europe. The serial property exhibits an important interchange of human and cultural values at the height of the Roman Empire, through the development of Roman military architecture, extending the technical knowledge of construction and management

to the very edges of the empire. It reflects the imposition of a complex frontier system on the existing societies of the northern part of the Roman Empire, introducing military installations and related civilian settlements, linked through an extensive supporting network. The frontier did not constitute an impregnable barrier, but controlled and allowed the movement of peoples. This entailed profound changes and developments in terms of settlement patterns, architecture and landscape design and spatial organisation.

Criterion (iii): As part of the Roman Empire's general system of defence, Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia bears an exceptional testimony to the maximum extension of the power of the Roman Empire through the consolidation of its northern frontiers and constitutes a physical manifestation of Roman imperial policy. The property illustrates the Roman Empire's ambition to dominate the world in order to establish its law and way of life in a long-term perspective. It demonstrates the processes of Roman colonisation in its territories, the spread of Roman culture and its different traditions – military, engineering, architecture, religion, management and politics. The large number of human settlements associated with the defences contribute to an understanding of how soldiers and their families lived in this part of the Roman Empire.

Criterion (iv): The Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia is a remarkable example of Roman military architecture and technological development. The property testifies to the versatility and sophistication of the Roman response to specific topography and climate, set against the political, military and social backdrop of the time in the northern part of the empire. Stretching for more than a thousand kilometres, it is the largest segment of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire. It comprises both land and riverine sectors, characterised by varying types, locations and densities of military installations distributed across the landscape. Fortifications of different sizes, set at irregular intervals, artificial linear barriers (stone walls, earthworks), natural barriers (mountain ranges, rivers), packed or sparse networks of watchtowers were all integrated within the same provincial border. The Dacian frontier exhibits numerous structural changes throughout its nearly 170 years of existence allowing insight into an important timeline in the history of the Roman Empire.

Integrity

The property of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia demonstrates the complexity of the European frontiers of the Roman Empire. A well-considered rationale for the selection of the 277 component parts has been developed, enabling the property to represent the phased establishment and the workings of the Dacian Limes, including its adaptation to and use of diverse landscapes. Some of the component parts of the property have been affected by exposure to natural elements and human activities. Archaeological excavations, field surveys, aerial photography and non-invasive investigations have established the completeness of the

component parts, and the intactness of most attributes is assessed as good to very good, showcasing the most important development phases. Despite processes of decay, many individual sites are very well preserved. With few exceptions, their exposure to threats is insignificant, and the boundaries are appropriately delineated.

Authenticity

The 277 component parts of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia demonstrate a very high degree of authenticity, due in part to the relatively short lifespan of the frontier and the relatively undisturbed rural locations of many of the component parts. Most of the sites remain free of modern constructions or later modifications, and the above and below ground structures retain their original form and design. Above-ground and excavated elements are conserved and generally in a good state of conservation, and non-invasive investigations indicate a good preservation of sub-surface archaeological materials. Since most of the areas in which the frontier component parts are located are lightly populated, the authenticity of the landscape setting for most component parts is high.

Protection and management requirements

All 277 component parts of Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Dacia are legally protected. All archaeological sites within the component parts are protected through their inclusion in the National Archaeological Record (RAN), and the process of designation of all of the component parts is in progress. The component parts, their buffer zones and immediate landscapes are also protected by laws for spatial planning, including the General Urban Plans which are being revised to ensure the recognition and protection of the component parts and clusters.

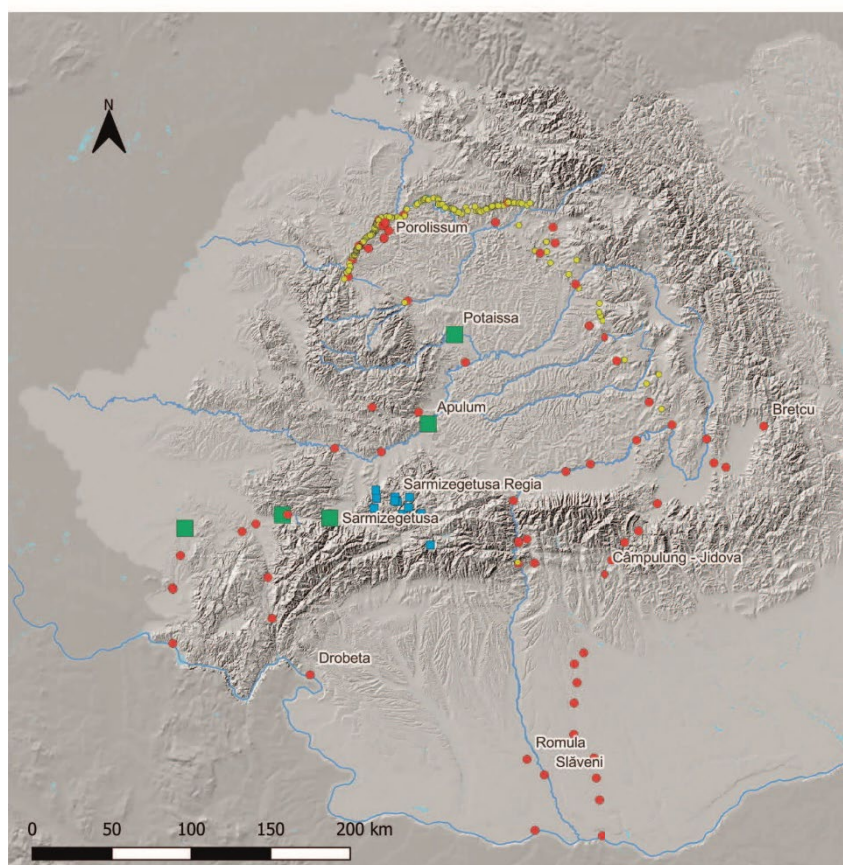
The management system integrates four levels of intervention, including the Ministry of Culture, County Councils, the National Institute of Heritage and the National Limes Commission. A UNESCO Organising Committee will be established to coordinate across these responsibilities. The National Limes Commission is responsible for the coordination of research activities and the scientific components of integrated management and monitoring. On an international level, the State Party continues to cooperate with partners within the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Cluster.

The management framework is oriented around three key management themes: research, conservation and enhancement; factors affecting the property; and tourism, visitor management and interpretation. The monitoring arrangements are outlined, and an action plan is provided. Based on this over-arching framework, the National Institute of Heritage will coordinate the development of management plans for each component part/cluster to guide local decision making. A number of important elements of the management system are under development, including the interpretation strategy and Heritage Impact Assessment.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party gives consideration to the following:

- a) Completing as soon as possible the programme to update the General Urban Plans in areas where component parts are located,
- b) Developing the template for the management plans for each component part/cluster and completing these plans to ensure that there is an overall coherence in management, and identification of relevant actions,
- c) Conducting deposit models/cellar surveys for components parts in urban or peri-urban areas in order to establish accurate information about the levels of survival of, and disturbance to archaeological deposits,
- d) Developing inter-agency agreements between the National Institute of Heritage and the Forestry Administration with measures to mitigate the impact of agriculture and forestry on relevant component parts and their related buffer zones, incorporating appropriate measures into the individual management plans,
- e) Completing the process of inclusion of all component parts in the National Register of Historic Monuments,
- f) Improving access to all material related to the Dacian *Limes* through the implementation of the project to create a central digital information portal, including further work on the data sets presented in Annex 3 of the nomination dossier to provide site-specific conservation actions,
- g) Improving the monitoring system and indicators, ensuring that all attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are included, and align monitoring with the Periodic Reporting questionnaire,
- h) Progressing work to build an interpretive framework and implementation of interpretation and presentation actions, including a programme to update signage and interpretation boards,
- i) Developing a sustainable tourism strategy,
- j) Completing the Dacian Limes research strategy, including clear criteria for any future interventions,
- k) Adopting as a priority, formal provisions for Heritage Impact Assessment for all development proposals within the component parts and buffer zones,
- l) Implementing the design measures for mitigation of impacts from the construction of the A1 Trunk Road Scheme to component parts 6.8 Racovița and 6.9 Copăceni-*Praetorium I*,
- m) Developing measures to encourage community participation and engagement in the care, protection, and management of the component parts,
- n) Submitting to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2025, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session in 2026.



Revised map showing the location of the nominated component parts (February 2024)