

Characteristic Features of the Defensive System of Caraşova-Grad Fortress (Comm. of Caraşova, Caraş-Severin County)

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Abstract

The fortress of Caraşova is situated on the territory of Caraşova commune, in Caraş-Severin County, at approximately ten kilometers south of the modern town of Reşiţa. The fortress was built of stone, on the top of a hill known as Grad. Until now, we have a small amount of information about the fortress of Caraşova. Due to some reasons (more or less objective), there are, in the archaeological and historical literature, some mistakes, because, in particular, the wrong interpretation of the written documents.

It was Györffy György, who, in 1987, clarified the historical situation of Caraşova fortress in the 13th-14th centuries. According to Györffy, two fortifications, with a similar name, are situated on the Caraş River – Krassóvár (known as Haram, too) and Krassófvár. The first one (Krassóvár) is the earliest, and it is situated in the place where Caraş River flows into Danube, and the second one (Krassófvár) is situated on the upper course of Caraş River. From the archaeological point of view, Györffy's opinion was confirmed by Liana and Silviu OŢa, who made excavations in Caraşova between 1998 and 2001.

During the archaeological excavations, we noticed that the fortress had three important stages of construction. These are characterized mainly by the enlargement of its space towards south-west and south. Thus, in the first phase, the building occupied the top of the hill. The fortress had an elongated shape, with towers at each end. In the second phase, a wall of enclosure was built in the south-western part, closing the access from this direction and increasing, at the same time, the inner space. The last phase consists of large arrangements of the enclosure wall and of the inner constructions, together with a new enlargement of its space towards south-west.

The first defense ditch was dug in the rock, in front of the future fortress, and it was doubled by another ditch. On the south-western side of this first phase of the fortress, there was a small passage way, between the enclosure wall and a part of an inner wall. Another defense structure consisted of a semicircular hole at the base of the northern side of the enclosure wall. Another characteristic feature of Caraşova fortress is the absence of the stone blocks made especially for the corners of the fortress.

The weaponry found here is modest as number. Most of the weapons are arrowheads or crossbow bolts, but their presence could be explained by the fact they were used either by those who attacked the fortress, or by those who defended it. A fragment of a blade of a big knife, a fixing tube, probably from a spear, a fragment of smelt lead and a stone ball from fire weapons, were also found.

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