

Szilvia Bíró, **Die zivilen Vici in Pannonien**. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Monographien, volume 131. Publisher Schnell und Steiner, Regensburg 2017. 402 pages with 130 black and white illustrations, 102 coloured illustrations, 232 partly coloured illustrations, 25 tables.

Settlement studies may involve a variety of methodological approaches, including historical, geographical, social, economic, or legal aspects. In archaeology research on settlement is very often based on studies of pottery, which are the most numerous finds at each site and enable not only locating the site and determining its surface, but also gaining insight into the local traditions, imports, and trade, changes in habits, as well as in the standards of living in the past. Regarding the Pannonian lands, this approach is easily observable in Dénes Gabler's extensive works. Settlement studies may also focus on the administration and legal status of settlements and settlers; hence, they make use of epigraphic and literary records. Recently, such studies have involved a holistic landscape approach that produces information on how people in the past transformed and used the environment. The major challenges facing Szilvia Bíró's book involved both introducing the appropriate methodological approach and managing the large amount of data resulting from the territorial scope of her work.

The publication was an indirect outcome of the EU project ›Transformation. The Emergence of a Common Culture in the Northern Provinces of the Roman Empire from Britain to the Black Sea up to 212 A. D.‹, realised and coordinated by the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mayence (RGZM) and thirteen partners between 2004 and 2007, within the framework of the ›Culture 2000‹ programme. The chapter ›Emergence of vici‹ was one of eleven themes presented within the project. Bíró undertook further research on the topic within the RGZM scholarship entitled ›Formen der Romanisierung in den Grenzprovinzen des Römischen Reiches an Rhein

und Donau«. The author based her study on publications from Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Croatia, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, which should be added to the list mentioned in the Introduction (p. IX). The results of the excavations and surveys conducted in these countries combined with the number of known inscriptions provide very rich evidence for settlement studies of the province. The last publications collected for the book are from 2014 and include the results of surveys in six countries, which is a value in itself.

Such rich material led Bíró to limit her study to the civilian vici only, that is the settlements which existed or emerged regardless of military settlement activity from the La Tène D period up to the fourth century A. D. Nonetheless, the subject she tackles is still complex and multi-faceted.

The book is composed of eight chapters and a summary, illustrated by an extensive number of tables, maps, and figures. At the end of the book, we find one catalogue listing the sites and another providing the epigraphic evidence. The main chapters are preceded by an extensive introduction (pp. 1–22), in which the author defines the geographical and chronological frames, describes the written sources, and briefly presents the term ›vici‹ in the western provinces. In this introductory part, Bíró's comparative assessment places strong emphasis on Pannonia's cultural backgrounds and relationships. Regardless of its overall tone, which is correct, this approach does not allow the reader to form even a general view of the adjacent provinces, that is Upper Moesia and Dalmatia, even though this would provide convincing background information. On the next pages, the author discusses the types of vici attested in Pannonia and lists four of them (Kastellvicus, einheimische dörfliche Siedlung, gewerbliche Siedlungen, vormunizipale stadtähnliche Siedlung). However, out of these four types only three are defined as they are included in the study, while the military vici type is not even briefly summarized, with the note instead that »dieser Vicustyp wird in dieser Studie nicht behandelt« and the reference given to Péter Kóvacs' publication written in Hungarian (p. 12 note 76). A brief presentation of the state of research and the proper literature would have been useful here, especially since some questions concerning the military vici and the role of the army are discussed in the last chapter (Die Veränderung des ländlichen Siedlungsnetzes) and the author has already dealt with some issues linked to the local population living in Pannonian military vici and knows the topic very well (Sz. Bíró, Die räumliche und zeitliche Verbreitung der pannonischen Grubenhäuser in: id. / A. Molnár [eds.], Ländliche Siedlungen der römischen Kaiserzeit im mittleren Donaauraum [Győr 2015] 89–118).

The primal meaning of the term ›vici‹ is a row of houses, both in a town or in the countryside, as well as a city quarter. This refers both to civilian settlements and military ones, within canabae (vici canabiarum) or auxiliary forts (military vici, Kastellvici). A village in the countryside was also described using this term due to its form, usually running along a street, contrary to Germanic villages as stressed by Tacitus (Germ. 41). Bíró presents this issue (pp. 3–6), although this subject could have been presented with a broader view on other meanings of the term ›vici‹, including both civilian and military sites (e. g. C. S. Sommer, The Military Vici of Roman Britain, B. A. R. Brit. Ser. 129 [Oxford 1984] 3 s.; Fr. Bérard in: A. Calbi / A. Donati / G. Poma [eds.], L'epigrafia del villaggio [Bologna 1993] 67–85; M. Tarpin, Rev. Études Ant. 80, 2009, 124–145, sp. 136–141; P. Kóvacs in: id. / W. Eck / B. Feher [eds.], Studia epigraphica in memoriam Géza Alföldy [Bonn 2013] 131–154). A more comprehensive discussion of the term with at least a brief presentation of the problems related to the term used in the civilian and military context would have been useful here, particularly as it is vital for achieving a proper understanding of the epigraphic records.

In this part, the author gives a thorough presentation of »archaeological definitions« of vici in the western part of the Empire (pp. 6–9) and in Pannonia (pp. 9–13), followed by a discussion of epigraphic evidence from this province (pp. 13–22). The twenty-two inscriptions mentioning vici in Pannonia collected in the annex at the end of the book provide information about villages and town quarters, which is an issue Bíró does discuss. The author explains why she did not include the inscription from Nauportus (probably Emona's quarter), but included vicus Gallorum (at Carnuntum) and vicus Fortunae (very possibly a quarter of the Roman colonia of Poetovio). At the same time, it would be good to list other excluded inscriptions, such as the one from Savaria mentioning vicus Caiav(---) (AE 1911, 222; AE 1972, 384) or some others which possibly allude to, for example, Syrian place names. In turn, the inscription mentioning »mil(es) co(hortis) vico Cuetrone« is difficult to read and perhaps the altar was moved from the surroundings of the military fort of Campona (see AE 2002, 1183). Number 8 in the epigraphic catalogue is particularly doubtful; the text is not clear, with the name (Dionis or Dio?), the status (vicus? civitas? regio?) of the mentioned place, and the identification of the military unit (which was an indication of the province) remaining uncertain.

The first chapter presents the methods and research problems (Methodik und Forschungsprobleme, pp. 29–43). Bíró draws atten-

tion to the very important problem of how to identify the excavated sites (pp. 29–37). Based on an overview of the publications on vici in Britannia, Gallia, Noricum, and Raetia, the author summarizes and presents the criteria she applied to Pannonia (pp. 31 s.) and discusses the issues recognizing the differences between vici and villae and providing an interpretation of unearthened remains (pp. 32 s.). The catalogue consists of one hundred thirty-three sites displayed on five coloured maps divided chronologically: the Claudian, Flavian, Hadrianic, Severan periods and the end of the third – beginning of the fourth century (Abb. 11–15). The maps are clear and very well prepared. They make distinctions between local and newly created sites, and they include military bases and cities of various legal status (*municipia*, *coloniae*). The following subchapters present a discussion of dating the finds from the late La Tène and Roman periods, particularly difficult with regard to the Roman imports found at indigenous sites (pp. 38–43).

The settlement structures are discussed in the second chapter (*Siedlungsstruktur*, pp. 45–151). In this extensive part of the book, the author discusses the sizes, defensive features, planning, buildings, changes in architectural structures, and cemeteries. The text is illustrated by maps and plans reproduced from other publications, but brilliantly improved by Bíró. She presents an observation that in the larger and better-explored sites there are no traces of land demarcation, which may mean that visible limitations were not typical features of the Pannonian vici (p. 59). The ancient literary sources clearly state that the Pannonian lands were surveyed and boundary disputes were adjudicated (Kóvacs, *Studia Alföldy* op. cit. 140). In fact, remains of cadastre and limitation are very often difficult to trace archaeologically, especially since arbitrary markers (*determinatio*) or natural landscape elements (*definitio*) could have been used to indicate boundaries. Although epigraphic evidence concerning land surveying is very poor, some traces of cadastre in Pannonia have nevertheless been recorded (A. Bődöcs in: id. / Z. Czajlik [eds.], *Aerial Archaeology and Remote Sensing from the Baltic to the Adriatic. Congr. Budapest 2012* [2013] 59–66). The plans of unearthened sites provide more details on internal parcelling and planning (pp. 62–93). Bíró analyses the structures of the Pannonian vici, including the pre-municipal phases of Aquincum, Carnuntum and Vindobona. In the next subchapter, one can read about the various types of buildings: pithouses (*Grubenhäuser*, pp. 93–108), which are extensively presented and discussed, wooden edifices (*Pfosten- und Schwellbalkenkonstruktionen*, pp. 109–117), stone constructions (*Steinbauten*, pp. 117–134), and other types of architecture (p. 135–137). We are pro-

vided with an array of well-prepared plans, photographs and figures supplemented by skilful commentary. The discussion of the function of the various types of structures is relatively short and focused on houses, farm houses, public edifices, and temples (pp. 137–142), but this partly reflects the appropriate caution against the dangers of overinterpretation. Bíró offers very interesting observations on the changes and architectural phases of the Pannonian vici (*Die Veränderung der Baustruktur*, pp. 142–150), which are illustrated by two tables and five maps presenting the use of clay, timber, and stone divided chronologically (tables 9 and 10 and figs. 143–148). The author provides a very legible presentation of the data she has collected. Cemeteries are briefly described (pp. 151 s.).

A separate third chapter focuses on economic factors (*Wirtschaftliche Faktoren*, pp. 153–174), expressed through the remains of manufacturing and farming activities. The author decides to discuss not only the structures but also examples of products, that is pottery and lead mirrors. The presentation of these finds was not essential, with the choice necessarily arbitrary and the drawings schematic (cf. figg. 154, 156, 158 and 162), while the space could have been used to show certain other figures in more detail (figg. 152, 166 and 171). The table prepared by the author showing the relations between the various types of pottery (made according to Celtic and Roman traditions) and places of their production is a very interesting presentation of the collected data (table 11).

The fourth chapter discusses the function of the vici in Pannonia (*Die Funktionen der vici*, pp. 175–194). The first part is actually a methodological discourse, but with regard to the function, not the size and shape of the sites. Bíró uses the typology presented by Harald von Petrikovits in 1977, later developed by Rudolf Fellmann and Thomas Fischer, and competently distinguishes this approach from the methodology presented in the first chapter of her book. Therefore, identifying the function of the vici is based on an analysis of the archaeological and epigraphic sources from the recorded sites, which is perhaps unnecessary as some of them may have changed their function over the course of their existence or could have combined various functions. The author manages to divide the vici into several groups: settlements related to thermal facilities and cult places (*Thermalsiedlungen und vici um Kultplätze*), settlements related to trade and economic activities (*Gewerbesiedlungen und vici mit landwirtschaftlicher Produktion*), villages with subsistence farming (*Dörfer mit Subsistenzwirtschaft*). The discussion is illustrated with maps and references to the epigraphic catalogue. Such classification is very convincing, still, the lack of a discussion of military

settlements and the avoidance of the *canabae* in the discussion concerning villages related to trade and farming (the second group) influences the overall depiction of the issue.

The type of settlements Bíró describes as ›Versorgungssiedlungen‹ have mainly been identified along the Pannonian frontier and this fact has even been presented in the very useful table 12. However, how are we to approach the fact that the table lists only parts of the Aquincum *canabae* (one vicus, no. 19), none of the other *canabae* and no extramural military base vici? Although Bíró declares that the monograph does not include military settlements, they could have been listed at least in a table to enable the proper understanding of the variety and number of all vici.

Additionally, one should also remember about private estates existing in the vicinity of military bases (even though they were built later, as the author states on p. 190), and this useful list appears on page 196 (table 13). Despite these useful tools and figures, we are not able to draw proper conclusions on the extensiveness of the logistic capabilities of the frontier's hinterland. This part of the book and its shortages should be treated as an emanation of the difficulties each author has to face while working on Roman settlement in the frontier provinces. The origins of some sites included in the catalogue are unclear and may have emerged as a result of the Roman settlement policy, for example the settlements at Aquincum, catalogue numbers 17–19 and 22, which are contemporary to the military bases, despite their native character. Should we treat them as local civilian settlements or as involuntary settlements for the local population? Last but not least, how should we classify such settlements located close to military bases – as related to the army or not? Perhaps a well-illustrated case study (e. g. Aquincum?) could be useful to the reader, who could become aware of the scale of the topic. Certainly, some references to the next chapters discussing the development of settlements could be included here (cf. pp. 258–272 and 274–281).

In the fifth chapter, Bíró presents the relationships between *villae* and vici, and the problem of so-called ›villa settlements‹ (Villen-Siedlungen, pp. 195–210). Here, the reader can become acquainted with a type of settlement that is not the subject of the book, the *villae*, which may have been part of more complex settlements or may have formed vici. This issue is difficult for two reasons, due to the limits of archaeological excavations and because of interpretations of space and landscape in antiquity. Nevertheless, the author has made a valuable and comprehensive evaluation of the known sources and sites. Perhaps, some notes concerning modern landscape surveying currently going on in Hungary would have been valuable here.

The sixth chapter focuses on the social structures of the vici (pp. 211–248) reflected in archaeological records, including housing, small finds, and epigraphic records. The evidence concerning local building traditions and pottery was analysed within chronological and territorial frames, which allowed the author to conclude how the process of Romanisation developed and from which direction it arrived (p. 223). The next subchapter discusses the remains that show links to the barbarians and foreigners who settled in Pannonia, both from the archaeological and epigraphic point of view. The issue of the relations among the inhabitants of the Pannonian vici and towns and the soldiers or veterans is analysed in the next two subchapters, based on epigraphic evidence collected in several tables (tables 18–21). Similarly, the discussion of the religious activities in vici refers to specific epigraphic finds (table 22) and archaeological discoveries.

The seventh chapter is an analysis of the six preceding chapters, and discusses the changes in the period in question (Die Veränderung des ländlichen Siedlungsnetzes von der Stufe LTD bis in die spätrömische Zeit, pp. 249–291). Here the author compares the archaeological records with historical events and analyses the features typical for the indigenous population, Roman influence, and the transformations that occurred up to the fourth century. This chapter is the crowning achievement of the very laborious studies conducted by Bíró. The author presents the specific features of the La Tène settlement in Pannonia and the changes it underwent under Roman influence. The vici collected in the catalogue are discussed here in chronological order: the settlements that survived the Roman conquest, settlements with local populations, which emerged during Roman rule, and settlements which followed a ›Roman pattern‹. The author presents interesting observations concerning the local population and the Roman military presence, for example: ›Bei der Errichtung und dem Verlauf der römischen Fernstraßen sowie der Gründung der ersten römischen Städte und militärischen Anlagen hat im Prinzip das vorangegangene Siedlungsnetz keine Bedeutung gehabt‹ (p. 257) or: ›Als Folge der verschiedenen neu gegründeten Militärläger und Städte sowie der Einrichtung neuer Fernstraßen behielten die vorrömischen Traditionen fast nur die Dörfer bei, die abseits dieser von den Römern stark beeinflussten Gebiete lagen‹ (p. 266). However, settlement related to the army is not discussed in the book, and the reader has to trust the author concerning her observations and conclusions about sites near military bases. Nevertheless, in this chapter Bíró refers to military settlement frequently. This admittedly excellent chapter could also have been enriched by the inclusion of some comparanda concerning

other border provinces, for example Moesia superior (M. Mirković in: ANRW II 6 [1977] 811–848).

The book ends with a summary presenting the author's main conclusions and observations (pp. 293–306). Regrettably, the editors did not decide to add any summaries in other languages.

Each settlement study may lack one fundamental element: precisely defined research questions the author is attempting to answer. Why have we chosen this particular subject and what are we searching for? How can other scholars make use of our research? Additionally, those who work on settlement studies always have to face the difficult task of dividing the presented material without too many repetitions in the text, since many subjects overlap. This task was tackled skilfully by the author, who introduces the reader logically and gradually to increasingly more detailed topics. The book by Szilvia Bíró is simultaneously a very useful and excellently illustrated guide and a good settlement study, which contains many details about the Pannonian vici and the nature of the rural settlement in this province. However, this publication also contains huge amounts of information without providing a clear definition of why they have been provided, and the reader may feel confused when searching for the conclusions. Nonetheless, the book deserves the attention of scholars interested in developing their knowledge of the issues discussed.

Warsaw

Agnieszka Tomas