



Time Travel at Timacum Minus Roman fort 370 AD

Goal

To present and implement the main principles of the Time Travel method in Knjasevac to museum professionals and teachers using Timacum Minus as the example

To introduce the possibilities of using cultural heritage, local sites and stories, as a resource for teaching and learning and also to open up for and solve various social and (inter)cultural issues

To reflect on fear and how it can be used as a constructive element in communication and problem solving and also on war and peace, to discover creative ideas for conflict resolution

Facts

The fort was founded on the place of existing settlement from prehistoric period (early iron age). The aboriginal settlers of this place were Timachi (people from the river Timok valley).

1. Different phases of reconstructing and rebuilding the fort:

1st phase: wooden architecture, Fort with wooden towers, palisade and fossa, 1st century A.D

2nd phase: square fort made of rounded rocks (firm and stronger in case of attack from barbarians) and it was military camp that was used to protect the main Roman roads, early 2nd century A.D.

3rd phase is total reconstruction at the end of 3rd century, Building of new type of square defensive towers. Used spolia, stones, gravestones and etc for rebuilding of some parts of the fort. That was the time of first Goth attacks in Upper Moesia guided by Attila

4th phase is the last reconstruction of the fort in 4th century. Big front towers were built - opus mixtum (stones and bricks).

The fort was destroyed in fire in the 5th century probably in 441 when the Huns attacked.

This was a military camp with soldiers from Thracia, Syria, Dardanorum, and later for cavalry recruited from barbarian tribes from Danube, Goths, Huns and Alans.

It looks like the fort later was moved up to the hills and reconstructed by the emperor Justinian. It is known from the literature that new fort near Timok was destroyed by first Serbian Grand Prince in 12th century, on the border between Serbian and Bulgarian/Late Byzantine Territory.

Roman Ravna (*Timacum Minus*) was the administrative center of a wider region (*territorium*) and the economy was based on mining. Metals, as gold, silver, lead, copper and iron were used. The main activity was the processing of copper and silver ore. The slopes of Stara Planina mountain are rich with gold, silver and copper ores. Romans exploited and took primary treatment of the ores. In specific mining areas *procuratores metallorum* were supervisors in the mines and taking care of the organisation and protection of work in mines.

The fort was part of the main roman roads and station for distribution of mines toward south of the Roman limes on Danube. The head of this region (Latin *territorium*) was a province governor and commander of the Legion. Inside the fortification there were different constructions, such as Horreum, Principia etc. and by the river roman baths.

Beside the military camp, along the road from Nais to the fort, a civil settlement developed. Big necropolis with around 160 graves has been discovered on the nearby hill; findings of jewelry, pottery and glass vessels, money, etc. According to the finds and analogies with Macedonian artifacts, we can say that Slavic people lived here.

Scenario, War or peace, the Quinquatrus Festival (alternative Armilustrum festival) at Timacum Minus, 370 AD

The people in the Timok valley are on the way to the Roman fort, Castrum Timacum Minus. Today is the day when the Quinquatrus Festival starts, Mars day, 19th March (alternative the day when the Armilustrum festival starts, 19th October). The festival is celebrated in the honour of Mars, the god of war, but also of agriculture, farming and fertility. In March the weapons are prepared for war, in October the weapons are purified and stored for the winter.

The allegory of Mars is fear. At the feast of Quinquatrus/Armilustrum, which goes on for several days, it is possible to listen to fortune tellers and to look into the future. What will happen to us this spring – another war or peaceful farm work? (What will happen to us this autumn – will the war end for good or will it begin again next spring? Will there be more focus on war or on peaceful farm work?) Those coming to the fort have left their homes and their work on farms and in the mines. They fear the commander and his soldiers and also the enemies in a future war, but at the same time they are looking forward to the festival today with food and drinks.

The praetor, the base commander of the legion, has demanded the people to pay their taxes today, bring the ore and also work on the reconstruction of the walls of the fort, because of the risk of war.

It is a time of turbulence; the Roman Empire is under attack from various tribes, and in this region from the Ostrogoths. Their famous leader King Ermanaric has created a Danubian kingdom. Also other Germanic, Slavic and nomadic tribes are on the move. There often seem to be a war here, why? People in the valley feel unsafe; will there be attacks? What will happen to our homes and children? Do we have to move? Most people have a two-edged view of the fort. It gives some protection but it also attracts soldiers and war.

Timacum Minus is the administrative centre of the region, the territorium. The commander is in charge of all the resources - pastures, woodland, rivers, stone quarries and mines - but also of the nearby villages and its people. The iron, copper and silver mines are well-known and a considerable income for the Romans. The local people, even children, work hard in the mines and carry the ore to the fort for refining. But they argue, is the salary enough for a broken arm or an aching back? The commander of the fort always seems to invent new taxes and new day work for the locals. He wants more of vegetables and food and textiles, more copper and silver and more labour work on the fort to make it stronger.

The fort also has positive sides. Here you can exchange some of your goods for jewellery, dinars or iron tools, maybe even find a nice husband. And once in a while there is a feast, when you drink and eat, recite Roman poets, and celebrate.

Today is such a double-edged day. The commander asks for taxes and hard work on the walls, but also hosts the Quinquatrus festival (Armilustrum festival), in the honour of Mars. The season of war is coming closer but also the season for farming. (The season of war is ending and soon also the season of farming). What will the future bring to us in the Timok valley?

What do we fear and what is our hope? The people reach the Porta Praetorian, the main gate. What will happen? What will be our future?

Roles

The participants are the locals coming to the fort to pay tax, work and celebrate the feast. Some leaders are persons in the fort: Commander and wife, architecti (chief engineer), officers

Key Questions

War or peace, hostilities or agriculture, fears or hopes, what is our future?

- What are the advantages of having the fort and these powerful people in the valley? – safety, access to some wealth, festivals
- What are the disadvantages and problems of being part of this huge Empire and having the fort here? – conquerors, attracts war, we're treated as lower class, extra day work, taxes, fear
- Why is there often a war here? How do we prevent more wars in the future?

Activities

- Military training (swordsmanship, spear, archery, drill, rope)
- Sport and board games (juggling, mill game, dame)
- Write and recite Vergilius, paint symbols of Mars (wolf, woodpecker) or the fort
- Preparing food (bread, eggs, cabbage, spices, olive oil, dried fruit)
- Make medicine

- Carry stones and construct (mathematic measurements)?
- Stone carving?
- Blacksmith work?
- Pottery?
- Jewellery?
- Repairing of clothes?

Time plan

10.00 Welcome, introduction, dress up
10.30 Walk to the site, scenario, characters, rules
10.50 Initiation, Activities
11.20 Gathering, some food and discussions
11.30 Offerings to Mars (cakes, fruit, vegetables, oil/liquid)
11.45 End, reflection
12.00 Walk back

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