Theses of doctoral (Ph. D.) dissertation

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Castra, castrum, castellum

Statistics and interpretation

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1 Previous research and problems

The ancient terminology of settlement and fortification types is a problematic question. Ancient sources are inconsistent, and whilst modern disciplines like archaeology have their own terminological conventions, these are not necessarily reflecting the way these words where used in antiquity. Furthermore, a significant number of commonly used dictionaries (and occasionally even encyclopaedic works) provide an incomplete or even misleading picture. One of the reasons could be that many of them are largely based on the vocabulary of classical literature – non-literary sources and ancient technical literature are often ignored, or not used to their full potential. Thus, the core idea behind my approach was to find a way to better understand how these words were used in antiquity, both in military and civilian contexts (the latter one is especially important in the case of *castellum*). From the vast vocabulary of roman military fortifications, the three words: *castra*, *castrum* and *castellum* were selected as target words for several reasons:

- they are the most fundamental words in the nomenclature of military installations and fortifications; other, more specific terms were often defined in relationship to these words.
- due to their prevalence, there is a large amount of source material (both literary and non-literary) that can be statistically analysed.
- the findings of this thesis can be put in broader context by analysing other words using similar or improved methodology, as well as analysing sources that are not discussed in this thesis in detail (e. g. papyri and Christian literature).

Furthermore, there is no comprehensive study about the ancient usage of these words. Modern literature generally uses them as part of the terminology of their respective field of research – e. g. in archaeological literature, *castellum* is usually applied to auxiliary forts, whilst *castra* is generally used for legionary camps – but relatively little effort was taken to investigate the ancient usage of these words. The Thesaurus Linguae Latinae-articles *castrum* (which includes *castra*) and *castellum* focuses more on the grammatical and stylistic aspects of the usage of these words, as well as largely ignores non-literary sources.

2 Methods

This thesis is largely based on statistical analysis. This approach provides a different viewpoint, compared to e. g. the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, and is intended to be a complementary tool that can help us better understand how these words were used in antiquity. This is comparable

to the relationship of excavations and aerial photography in the field of archaeology: they both show different aspects of the same thing; they can reveal things that the other cannot. They are not meant to supplant, but to support the other one. They have one more thing in common: they were made available by technological advancements. Without easily researchable digital databases this thesis would have been highly impractical, if not impossible to make. One of the reasons that such a study was not yet undertaken is that the tools required to make it were not available, say, 20 years ago.

The analysed corpora include a collection of classical literary works (the digital edition of the Bibliotheca Teubenriana Latina, CD-ROM, 2002), non-literary sources (inscriptions found in the Epigraphische Datenbank Clauss-Salby (EDCS), http://manfredclauss.de/), normative legal texts (from The Latin Law Library, http://droitromain.upmf-grenoble.fr/) and the Holy Scripture (Septuagint, Greek New Testament and the Vulgate: http://academic-bible.de). For each of these source groups, I have collected all occurrences of *castra*, *castrum* and *castellum*, and created a statistical summary in what context/meaning these words are used. Also, group-specific analysis was done for each of the above mentioned source groups:

For literary works, passages where *castellum* is used in relationship with words denoting settlement types are analysed, as well as a collection of them is provided in the appendix. Legal texts where analysed from the same aspect too.

For inscriptions, additional statistics about distribution in time and space are added, as well as other context-specific statistics are provided (e. g. in the case of settlements, are they *res publicae*, do they have walls etc.).

The Holy Scripture is unique as it provides parallel Greek and Latin texts. For this reason, I have also analysed what are the Greek equivalents in the Septuagint/Greek New Testament of the Latin words *castra*, *castrum* and *castellum*. From the perspective of my research, the Hebrew/Aramic equivalents are irrelevant.

Finally, a table of settlement names incorporating the words *castra*, *castrum* or *castellum* and the statistical analysis of some of their properties give insights how and why the words *castra*, *castrum* and *castellum* were used to denote settlements, or were incorporated into settlement names. This table includes all settlement names found in the sources mentioned above (except the Holy Scripture), as well as incorporating settlement names from the Antonine Itinerary, the Itinerarium Burdigalense (or Hierosolymitanum), the Tabula Peutingeriana, the Ravenna Cosmography and the Barrington Atlas.

3 Results and findings

The thesis looks at the three topic words from a different perspective, hoping that it can help us better understand their ancient usage patterns. The statistical approach complements the results of more traditional approaches, e. g. that of the Thesaurus Linguae Latinae. It is not intended to fundamentally change the picture, but to help in refining the details. Furthermore, it paves the way for future research – for example, analysing related words (e. g. *burgus*, *praesidium*) using similar (or improved) methodology would give an even more complete picture, and would allow us to demonstrate some aspects of change over time (e. g. to what extent have more specific terms like *burgus* or *praesidium* displaced more generic terms like *castellum*).

3.1 Findings related to *castellum*

Analysis of some commonly used dictionaries reveals that they may contain incomplete or misleading information about *castellum*, especially in the case of *castellum* as settlement type. Some dictionaries state or imply that fortification or elevated position (that is, fortification by nature) was an inherent trait of the *castellum* settlement type. This misconception seems to be prevalent despite it cannot be substantiated by ancient sources. Possibly such misconceptions are a result of the incorrect generalisation of the context of *castellum* in certain literary works. We have to emphasise, of course, that *castellum* indeed has such a meaning and connotation, but it is only one aspect of it.

The Thesaurus Linguae Latinae does not clearly separate the 'settlement' and 'fort' meaning of the *castellum*. On the other hand, the Realenzyklopädie does this separation, and gives more detailed and accurate picture on the *castellum* settlement type.

In addition to a settlement and a fort type, *castellum* is also applied to a specialized fort-like building used to distribute water from aqueducts (*castellum aquae*). This is a highly technical term and is mostly encountered in legal texts and non-literary sources, like inscriptions. In literary works it is very rare, with the exception of Frontinus' *De aquaeductu Urbis Romae*, and Vitruv's *De architectura*, that discuss specifically *castellum aquae*, from legal-administrative and technical perspective, respectively. Since the meaning of *castellum* is clear in this case, these occurrences are less interesting for us and are only briefly discussed.

Furthermore, *castellum* is occasionally used in metaphoric sense, but there is no such systemic usage as in the case of *castra*. On a single inscription we encounter *castellum figlinarum*, the name of the military brickyard. The *Castellus cognomen* is documented on several occasions.

3.1.1 *Castellum* as settlement type

Analysis of phrases where *castellum* occurs in relationship with other settlement types (like *vicus*, *oppidum*, *urbs*, *civitas*, *colonia*, *municipium*) can further refine our understanding how *castellum* related to them. These include typical cases where *castellum* is 'paired' (e. g. '*vici et castella*') or contrasted with another settlement type, or is present in an enumeration of settlement types. Such phrases are found frequently in literary as well as legal sources. The analysis of these sources allow us to draw some conclusions on the meaning and usage of *castellum*, and especially its relationship to other settlement types:

Castellum and *vicus*: *castellum* and *vicus* (or *viculus*) generally denote settlements of the same or very similar standing, which is inferior to cities (*urbs*, *civitas*). Occasionally, the relationship of *castellum* and *vicus* (or *viculus*) seems to be more hierarchical, with *vicus* being inferior/subordinate to *castellum* (Liv. 21. 33. 11. *castellum inde, quod caput eius regionis erat, viculosque circumiectos capit*). Our general conclusion is that '*vici et castella* '–type phrases denote a single, rural settlement type which is inferior to cities, and has no fortifications or other special trait (e. g. elevated position).

Castellum and *civitas*, *oppidum*, *urbs*: *castellum* may appear as equal or similar to *oppidum*, *civitas, urbs*. In these cases, the similarity or equality seems to be the presence of fortifications, and/or having significant defensive capabilities. In many cases it cannot be determined with certainty if *castellum* means a fortified settlement, or a fort that has no civilian function at all. In other cases, especially when paired with *vicus*, *castellum* may denote a subordinate village without any kind of defensive capability, or settlements that are on the opposite side of the spectrum of settlement types (city – village). Alternatively, *castellum* may denote a tower, bastion or other smaller fortification that is part of the defensive system of a city.

Castellum and *colonia*, *municipium*: *colonia* and *municipium* do not appear together with *castellum* in contexts similar to *civitas, urbs, oppidum*. This indicates that *castellum* is never considered an equal, or even complementary category of *colonia* or *municpium*. Furthermore, it may indicate that *castellum* is much less a legal-administrative category of settlements than *colonia* or *municipium* are.

The position of *castellum* in enumerations of settlement types (both in literary and legal texts) also show that *vicus* and *castellum* are closely tied together, and they are of the lowest or near-lowest rank of settlements. It rarely happens that a settlement type is inserted between *vicus* and *castellum* (e. g. Flor. Epit. 2.7.41 (3. 19. 9.): *vicos oppida castella*), or *vicus* and *castellum* is

'sandwiched' between higher-ranking settlement types (e. g. C. Th. 16.2.16: *oppido vico castello municipio*). There seems to be a preference of the '*vicus* and *castellum*' order, but '*castellum* and *vicus*' also occurs.

Epigraphic evidence shows that from the 76 *castellum* topographic names (that include both military forts and civilian settlements), 7 is attested being *res publica* (i. e. having some form of self-governance) and 6 settlements having walls. The rank of *colonia* or *municipium* is not attested. *Magistri* are also attested as the administrative leaders of *castella* (*magister castelli*), which is also indicative of the lower status of *castellum* (cf. similar *magistri* are attested for *vici* and *pagi*, but not for settlements of higher rank).

In the Vulgate, *castellum* is generally used as the equivalent of κώμη (12 out of 16 cases), and only 3 times for other words (ἔπαυλις, οἴκησις, σκηνή). There are only two cases, where it is used in military and not civilian context, both in the Old Testament (2 Chron. 27.4: οἰκήσεις καὶ πύργους = *castella et turres*, Judit 2. 12: *ascenditque omnia castella eorum et obtinuit omnem munitionem*). This usage pattern confirms that *castellum* was used in the sense of a 'village' of any kind, without the requirement of special features like reinforcements or elevated position.

Settlement/fort naming conventions may also cast some light on the relationship of *castellum* and other settlement types. In approximately 50% the settlement name is simply 'adapted', that is borrowed from a local language (possibly the name of an already existing settlement) with '*castellum*' attached, or prefixed. In 25% of the cases we find names that are derived from other settlement names: the usual pattern is *castellum* + adjective derived from the original settlement name with –(*i)ense* or –*itanum* ending. Alternatively, it can take the form of possessive structures (*castellum –iensium*/*-itanorum*). These endings may indicate that the settlement is a subordinate village of the city from which its name was derived, but cannot be used as a definitive evidence, partly due to historical development: a once subordinate village may develop into an autonomous community. For military forts, this naming convention may refer to the settlement in or near which the fort was built. 7% percent of the names are ethnonymic, and the rest is shared by settlements/forts named after people, mythical figures/deities and generic names (*Castellum* + generic adjective, e. g. *Castellum minus*). There are also occasions where the settlement name does not contain other element than *castellum*. This is perhaps an artefact: our sources sometimes only refer to the settlement as 'the *castellum*' with the actual name being omitted because it was obvious for the contemporary reader (usually on *instrumenta domestica* or milestones). Occasionally, we may guess which *castellum* is meant.

Summarily, we can conclude that *castellum* can denote two different type of settlements: 1) a fortified settlement that has a defensive function or capability, similar to larger cities, but perhaps being smaller (hence the diminutive word is used); 2) a small rural settlement (village) that is subordinate or at least vastly inferior to cities. There is an especially close tie between *vicus* and *castellum* in this second meaning, and '*vici* (or *viculi*) *et castella*' is used only in this sense. The exact meaning and connotation of *castellum* (settlement or fort; fortified or not) seems to be highly dependent on the context, and particularly what other settlement types are mentioned at the same location.

3.1.2 *Castellum* as fort

Castellum may denote fortified settlements (as indicated above) as well as purely military forts. In this latter sense, it may denote a "standalone" fort, or a smaller component of a larger fortification system (guard tower, bastion etc.), usually belonging to a major city. A *castellum* is always a fixed instalment/building, unlike *castra* that may denote a mobile camp/base. An evidence for that is the absence of phrases pertaining to the relocation of the *castellum* (e. g. there is *castra movere*, but there is no similar term with *castellum*). Furthermore, the *castellum* usually denotes a relatively small instalment. This is evident in the case where *castellum* means a tower/bastion-like smaller component of a larger fortification system.

Epigraphic evidence indicates that standalone forts called *castellum* were generally smaller than larger *castra*, that can accommodate an entire *legio* or more: building inscriptions of *castella* indicate that the unit responsible for the construction is either an auxiliary *cohors* or a legionary *vexillatio* – but not a full legion. This also indicates that the term *castellum* was not exclusively reserved for auxiliary forts.

3.2 Findings related to *castra*

The meaning of *castra* as 'military camp' is fairly stable and consistent, but its usage patterns differ greatly in various source groups. It developed a series of metonymic (*castra* as the army, or military service in general) and metaphoric meanings (e. g. *castra* as 'political side, party') too, some of which became part of the official language and are used in legal texts too (e. g. *in castra ire* = 'joining the army', 'starting military service', *castra fugere* = 'attempt to avoid military service' and so on). Occasionally, especially in later antiquity, it is used in non-military contexts, like administrative 'headquarters' of non-military organizations (NR Reg. XIIII, 22: *castra lecticariorum*), 'temple' / 'shrine' (EDCS-25300087: *omnis quae fecit castra nitere*

sua),[1] or a settlement type (CJ Nov. 28. pr., 535 AD: *Sebastopolin inter castra magis adnumeramus quam civitates*), cf. the similar usage of *castrum* and perhaps the byzantine term κάστρον. During the course of time, the difference – both morphologically and semantically – blurred somewhat between *castra* and *castrum*, and one could be used in the place of the other.

On inscriptions, *castra* is generally used in specialized contexts, with *mater castrorum* – an honorary title of the mother or wife of the emperor, first attested for Faustina, the wife of Marcus Aurelius, and then most prominently used in Severan times – providing almost half of the occurrences (46%). More than a quarter of the occurrences (28%) is provided by *origo castris* – a fictional *origo* used by soldiers in the 2nd and early 3rd centuries. In approx. 12% of the cases it refers directly to military camps of various units, or – much less frequently – to military camps in general. In 8% percent of the cases *castra* occurs as part of military post names (most frequently the *praefectus castrorum*). The remaining occurrences (approx. 7%) are shared by metonymic/metaphoric usage (mostly on funerary inscriptions; '*in castra ire*' = 'joining the army' is used on military diplomas), settlement/fort/military camp names, the *genius castrorum* (a subtype of *genius loci*), *disciplina castrorum* (one occurrence only), and a few cases where the context of *castra* is uncertain.

In legal texts, *castra* refers to military camps in general in approximately half of the occurrences. The remaining occurrences are dominated by the metonymic usage of *castra* (as 'military service'), and is used especially frequently in relation to the *peculium castrense*. In only one case (CJ Nov. 28. pr., 535 AD) it denotes a settlement type, as quoted above.

In the Vulgate, *castra* is usually (in 85% of the cases) used as the equivalent of παρεμβολή, usually in military context, but also more generally as 'camp'. In 6 cases *castra* + transitive verb is used for Greek verbs or verbals, due to the differences between the Greek and Latin vocabulary: παρεμβάλλω, προσάγω – *castra admovere*; ἀπαίρω, ἐξαίρω – *castra movere*; τάσσω/τάττω – *castrorum acies ordinare*. In the latter case, *castra* can be interpreted metonymically as the 'army'. On 4 occasion, nouns other than παρεμβολή are rendered as *castra*: ἀνάπαυσις = *castrorum locus* (Numbers 10.33), οἶκος κυρίου = *castra Domini* (2 Chron. 31.2), παράταξις = *castra* (1 Samuel 17.23), στρατιά = *castra et profectiones* (Numbers 10. 28). παράταξις = *castra* and στρατιά = *castra* can be interpreted as metonymic usage (although *acies* would be perhaps more appropriate for παράταξις). οἶκος = *castra* is more uncommon.

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[1] Cf. The commentary in CLE 1616: *omnis* (deos scilicet) *quae fecit castra nitere sua* (aediculas nitidas habere), memineris Afros etiam castram dixisse.

Castra settlement/fort/military camp naming conventions are generally identical to the patterns of *castellum* or *castrum* settlement/fort names. The most obvious difference is the much higher proportion of *castra* named after people (c. 30%, as opposed to c. 3% in the case of *castellum*, and 7% in the case of *castrum*). This can be partly attributed to the fact that a series of settlements are named after famous military leaders (e. g. Kyros, Alexander the Great, Pyrrhos, Hannibal, Cornelius Scipio), usually because they once camped in or around the named settlements (or at least they were believed to do so). Imperial names are also much more common. Names derived from other settlement names (with the same naming conventions as in the case of *castellum*) usually denote military camps in or in the vicinity of the named cities. Generic names (like Castra Nova) are also more common than in the case of *castellum*.

3.3   Findings related to *castrum*

The singular *castrum*, if compared to *castra* and *castellum* is infrequently used. It is mostly attested in settlement names. In literary sources, the second most common context is grammatical examples or other linguistic explanations. *Castrum*, as a settlement or fortification type, was used more frequently in late antiquity, and especially in the byzantine period, where its Greek equivalent (κάστρον) became a term to denote fortified cities. On the other hand, *castrum* in settlement names is attested in earlier times too, without the connotation of military camps or fortifications. In late antiquity, the boundary between *castra* and *castrum* seems to be somewhat blurred, both morphologically and semantically.

The *Castrus* cognomen, as well as *castrum praetorianum* (instead of *castra praetoria*) is attested. In the late antiquity, we encounter *castrum* on building inscriptions as military 'fort'/'camp'.

Legal texts use the word infrequently too: in the researched corpus, we find only 5 occurrences. Two of them are settlement names (CTh. 7.4.30: *Moenoenum castrum;* Nov. 31.1.3: *Citharizon castrum*), two *praefectura castri* (CTh. 8.7.11 = CJ. 12.59.1, instead of the classical *praefectura castrorum*). There is one last (Dig. 27.1.17.7), more interesting case where *castrum* is used in the sense of military camp, as the singular form of *castra*.[2]

The Vulgate, again, uses *castrum* infrequently: we find only 3 occurrences, all related to settlement names: Susa twice (Neh. 1.1: *in Susis castro* = ἐν Σουσαν αβιρα, Dan. 8. 2: *in Susis*

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[2] Dig. 27.1.17.7: *Inquilini castrorum a tutelis excusari solenti nisi eorum, qui et ipsi inquilini sunt et in eodem castro eademque condicione sunt.*

castro = ἐν Σούσοις τῇ πόλει), and Ecbatana once (Ezra 6. 2: *in Ecbathanis quod est castrum in Madena provincia* = ἐν πόλει ἐν τῇ βάρει τῆς Μήδων).

Despite settlement name is the most common context in all source groups, *castrum* settlements are not really numerous: in our collection, there are 30 *castrum*, 77 *castra* and 151 *castellum* settlement/fortification names. In the case of *castrum* settlement names, although documented from various regions of the empire, a strong concentration in Italy (with almost 50% of *castrum* names documented there) can be observed. Furthermore, these seem to be the highest-ranked settlements (compared to *castra* and *castellum*-settlements): *castrum* has the highest rate of *coloniae* and *municipii*, as well as the highest rate of settlements called *urbs*, *oppidum* or *civitas*. This is especially true for Italian *castrum* settlements.

4 Publications

Anonymi Auctoris De rebus bellicis - A hadügyről in: Székely Melinda – Illés Imre (szerk.): Késő római szöveggyűjtemény. JATE Pess, Szeged, 2013. 215-249

"*sic semper tyrannos*"? – A *tyrannus* jelentésváltozásai a késő antikvitásban (Nyelvészdoktoranduszok 14. Országos Konferenciája 2010. november 30. – december 1., Szeged)

Haditechnika és ókori tudomány. (A *Collegium Hungaricum Societatis Europaeae Studiosorum Philologiae Classicae* (CHSEC) IV. országos konferenciája, 2009. május 29-30., Piliscsaba) in: ARISTEIA. A Collegium Hungaricum Societatis Europaeae Studiosorum Philologiae Classicae IV. országos konferenciáján elhangzott előadások. szerk.: Adorjáni Zsolt Jutai Péter Bp, 2009. 145-149.

Anonymi Auctoris De rebus bellicis. Reformötletek a késő antikvitásból. (A Collegium Hungaricum Societatis Europaeae Studiosorum Philologiae Classicae (CHSEC) III. országos konferenciája, 2008. május 20–21., Szeged) in: ENUMERATIO. A Collegium Hungaricum Societatis Europaeae Studiosorum Philologiae Classicae III. országos konferenciáján elhangzott előadások. szerk.: Tóth István – Jutai Péter Bp, 2008. 107-113.