

MAPPING ROMAN DACIA: THE IMPERIAL ROAD FROM *BRUCLA* TO *SALINAE*

*Florin-Gheorghe Fodorean**

* “Babeş-Bolyai” University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Department of Ancient History and Archaeology; fodorean_f@yahoo.com

Rezumat. Scopul contribuției noastre este acela de a aduna toate informațiile pentru a reconstitui un segment foarte important din fostul drum imperial al Daciei: sectorul dintre așezările *Brucla* (Aiud?) și *Salinae* (Războieni-*Cetate*?). Pentru a realiza acest deziderat am utilizat informații din surse geografice antice, din hărțile moderne și din cercetările de teren. Studiul nostru va încerca să pună în evidență, cu acuratețe, traseul acestui drum roman.

Cuvinte cheie: drum roman, așezare rurală, peisaj, topografie, râul Mureș.

1. The main road of Roman Dacia. A short review

Stretching from the Danube up to *Porolissum*, the main ‘highway’ of Dacia represented the most important road built by the Romans before and after the conquest¹. The importance of this road can be sustained by the following arguments:

1. The road sectors *Lederata–Tibiscum* and *Dierna–Tibiscum* were built during the first and the second Dacian wars. This is proved by the scenes from Trajan’s Column, which show Roman legionary soldiers involved in building activities, cutting forests, and building bridges and roads. The lost work of Trajan, *De Bello Dacico*, also indicates that the emperor advanced in Banat using the line *Lederata–Tibiscum*;
2. After the conquest of Dacia in 106 A.D., almost all the major cities of the province appeared and developed along the main imperial road: *Porolissum*, *Napoca*, *Potaissa*, *Apulum*, *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, *Tibiscum*, and *Dierna*;
3. The legionary fortresses of Roman Dacia were also erected along this road: *Berzovia*, *Apulum* and *Potaissa*;
4. The Peutinger map depicts this main artery with all the major toponyms².

Therefore, this road was, obviously, the main artery of Dacia. Constructed during and immediately after the conquest of the province, its role was military and strategic. It represented the core of the road network, together with the settlement from *Apulum*, which was the main crossroads of Roman Dacia.

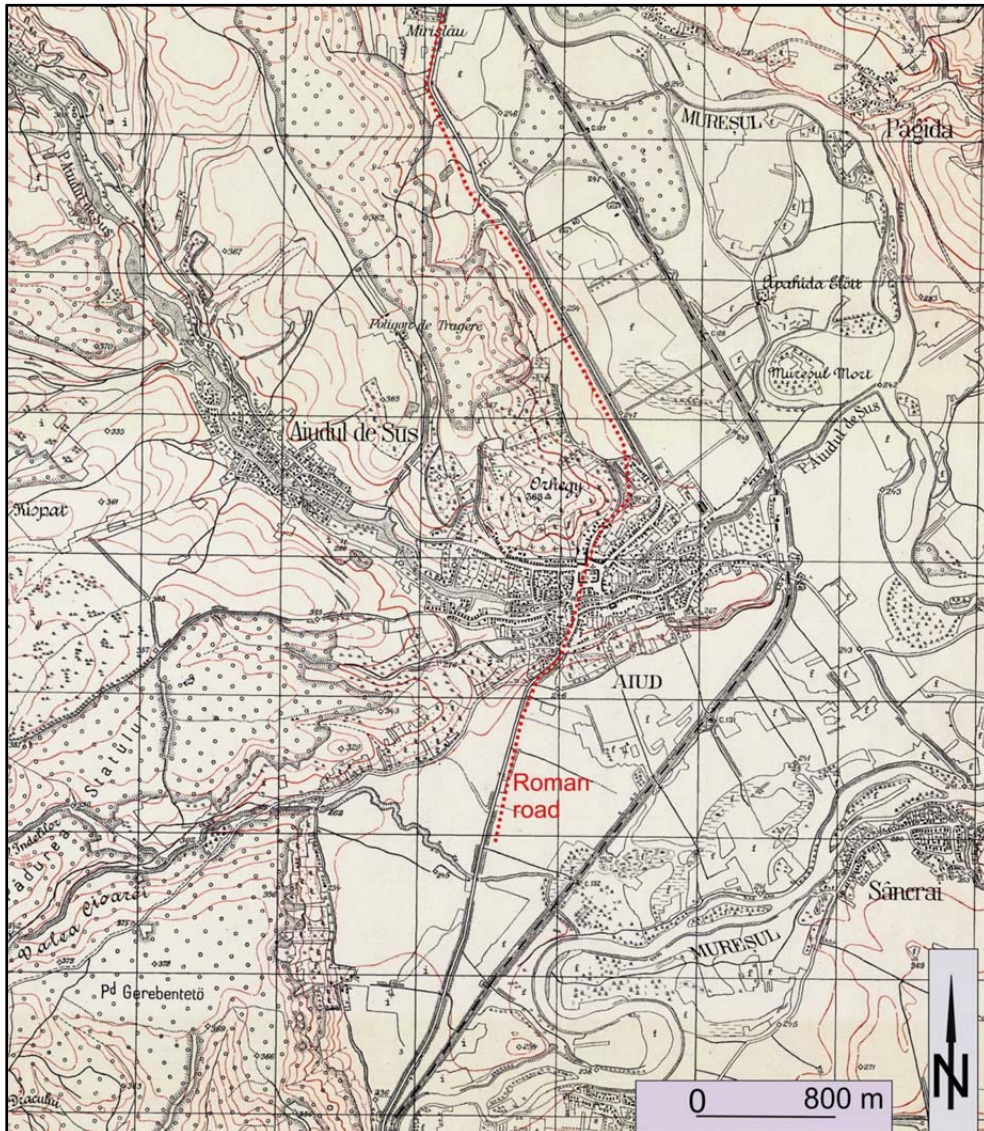
Our present study will use archaeological and historical data, combined with cartographic support, in order to establish, if possible, the accurate route of this road

¹ Fodorean, 2013, p. 15-16.

² Fodorean, 2014, p. 99-101.

between the settlements *Brucla* and *Salinae*.

From *Brucla* to *Salinae* we know, so far, several places with discoveries dated during the Roman times. The first settlement in this sector is Aiud. We cannot be certain that the toponym *Brucla*, mentioned in the Peutinger map, should be located at Aiud, though within the territory of the city and around it we know so far several important discoveries.



2. The topography of the Roman road from *Brucla* to *Salinae*.

During the last century, within the territory of Aiud, there were found: inscriptions³, reliefs, sculptures, coins, and ceramic fragments. The density of the finds and their location indicates that the former Roman settlement developed in the south and in the south-western part of the current city⁴. Close to the Tudor Vladimirescu Street, a Roman sarcophagus was found, together with another tomb⁵. A small fragment of a military diploma, dated in 86 A.D., during Domitian, was discovered close to the current building of ‘Colegiul Național Gabriel Bethlen’⁶. During the construction of the building of the city hall, a tile with the stamp *LVM* (Legio V Macedonica) was found⁷. The editors of the archaeological repertory of the Alba County have advanced the idea that this stamp proves that the area of this settlement is located at the limit of the *territoria* of the legions XIII Gemina and V Macedonica. In a study from 2003⁸, we have proposed, based on all the archaeological discoveries, that the southern line of *territorium Potaissae* is marked by the settlements from Decea, Mirăslău and Lopadea. On the other hand, a brick with the stamp of the legion XIII Gemina was found close to the entrance of the former Roman road within the territory of the current city⁹. Therefore, we suppose that Aiud (the ancient *Brucla*?) rather belonged to the territory of the legion garrisoned in *Apulum*.

Within the territory of the so-called Aiudul de Sus (which is part of Aiud), other Roman discoveries are attested. Roman bricks were found within the area of the former forest belonging to the ‘Colegiul Național Gabriel Bethlen’.¹⁰ This might indicate the existence, in this area, of a former Roman building. But the most consistent discovery from this area is a possible *villa rustica*, located at the confluence of Pârâul Aiudului with the rivulet Valea Gropilor. The results of the archaeological excavations carried out here were published in 1968.¹¹ The building of the villa has a rectangular shape (21,10 × 17,40 m).¹² A *prae-furnium* and a hypocaust installation were found here, and also another building, a possible *horreum*¹³.

The Roman road was identified at the entrance in the city of Aiud, in the area of the Tudor Vladimirescu Street (**Fig. 1**). It was also identified close to the exit from Aiud, in the northern part, along the street where the ‘Colegiul Național Gabriel Bethlen’

³ *IDR*, III/4, 64. I. I. Russu noted, in 1988 (*IDR*, III/4, p. 59), that other inscriptions mentioned by Th. Mommsen at *Brucla* were actually from other settlements (*Germisara* and *Ampelum*).

⁴ A short description at Oltean, 2007, p. 155.

⁵ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 24.

⁶ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 23.

⁷ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 24. See also <http://www.cimec.ro/scripts/arh/rar-index/sel.asp?nr=1&Lang=RO&NrSel=0&IDRap=1664> (Arhiva Repertoriul arheologic al României a Institutului de Arheologie “Vasile Pârvan” - Index de locuri. Aiud); Popa, 2002, s.v. Aiud.

⁸ Nemeti, Nemeti, Fodorean, 2003, p. 73.

⁹ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 24.

¹⁰ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 27.

¹¹ Winkler *et alii*, 1968, p. 59-85.

¹² Șandru, 1999, p. 77.

¹³ Șandru, 1999, p. 82.

is located¹⁴.

Regarding the location of *Brucla* in today's city of Aiud, the Peutinger map depicts *Apulum* followed, after 12 miles, by *Brucla*, then after another 12 miles *Salinae* and then *Potaissa*. But the current distance between Alba Iulia and Aiud is today 36 kilometers. Therefore, the possibility of including here another segment of 12 miles seems plausible¹⁵.

Close to Aiud, at Ciumbrud, only several ceramic fragments belonging to the Roman period were found¹⁶. Traces of a former Roman presence were found also at Mirăslău¹⁷. Along the road from Aiud to Ocna Mureș, maybe the most important settlement is Decea. Ceramic fragments, bricks, coins, and a *mithraeum* discovered in 1888 were found here¹⁸. Roman traces were also identified in Micoșlăca.

Consistent discoveries are also attested within the territory of Unirea: traces of foundations, coins, and tile stamps of *legio V Macedonica*¹⁹. Such discoveries are also recorded in Ocna Mureș²⁰.

2. Final remarks

Of all the settlements with discoveries in the sector *Brucla–Salinae*, the most important are those from Aiud and Decea. Within the area of these two localities traces of foundations, bricks, tiles, ceramic fragments, coins and inscriptions were found. All these indicate that the most important settlements were located in the close vicinity of the Roman road. Mapping all these discoveries, we can advance an opinion regarding the route of the Roman road in this sector. The Roman road enters in Aiud along the Tudor Vladimirescu Street, and then it keeps the same line, moving towards north, possible close to the current Bethlen Gábor Street. From this point, the road exits from Aiud, and it keeps the same right bank of the Mureș River, until it reaches the fort from Războieni-*Cetate*. Future terrain researches, combined with archaeological data, will offer the possibility to establish the route of this road from Războieni-*Cetate* to Lunca Mureșului and Gligorești.

¹⁴ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 24.

¹⁵ Fodorean, 2014, p. 106.

¹⁶ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 80.

¹⁷ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 128.

¹⁸ Moga, Ciugudean, 1995, p. 128

¹⁹ Popa 2002, s.v. Unirea, *on-line* at <http://arheologie.ulbsibiu.ro/publicatii/bibliotheca/popa/repertoriu%20thi.htm> (accessed at 1.10.2016).

²⁰ Popa, 2002, s.v. Ocna Mureș, *on-line* at <http://arheologie.ulbsibiu.ro/publicatii/bibliotheca/popa/repertoriu%20no.htm> (accessed at 1.10.2016).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fodorean, 2013 Florin FODOREAN, *The Topography and the Landscape of Roman Dacia*, Oxford, Archaeopress, British Archaeological Reports (BAR), International Series, 2501, 2013, 147 pg., ISBN 1407311174, 978-1407311173
- Fodorean, 2014 Florin FODOREAN, *Pannonia, Dacia și Moesia în izvoarele geografice antice*, Ed. Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, 260 pg., ISBN 978-606-543-459-2.
- IDR, III/4 *Inscripțiile antice din Dacia și Scythia Minor*, Colecție îngrijită de D. M. PIPPIDI și I. I. RUSSU, Seria Primă: *Inscripțiile Daciei Romane*, Volumul III: *Dacia Superior, 4: Zona răsăriteană*, Adunate, însoțite de comentarii și indice, traduse de Ioan I. RUSSU, Institutul de Istorie și arheologie Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, București, 1988, 300 pg.
- Moga, Ciugudean, 1995 Vasile MOGA, Horia CIUGUDEAN (eds) [et alii], *Repertoriul arheologic al județului Alba*, Muzeul Național al Unirii Alba Iulia, Bibliotheca Musei Apvlensis, II, Alba Iulia, 1995, 271 pg. + 33 Pl. + o hartă.
- Nemeti, Nemeti, Fodorean, 2003 Sorin NEMETI, Irina NEMETI, Florin FODOREAN, *Territorium Potaissae*, In: *Revista Bistriței*, XVII, 2003, p. 69-75.
- Oltean, 2007 Ioana A. OLTEAN, *Dacia: Landscape, Colonization and Romanization*, Routledge, London and New York, 2007, 264 pg., ISBN ISBN 0-415-4125-8, 978-0-415-41252-0
- Popa, 2002 Dumitru POPA, *Villae, vici, pagi. Așezările rurale din Dacia intra carpatică*, Ed. Economică, Sibiu, 2002, ISBN 973-590-706-2 (on-line <http://arheologie.ulbsibiu.ro/publicatii/bibliotheca/popa/cuprins.htm>).
- Șandru, 1999 Ilie ȘANDRU, *Vilele rustice din Dacia*, Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj-Napoca, Disertație (ms), 1999, 177 pg.
- Winkler et alii, 1968 Iudita WINKLER, Valentin VASILIEV, Lidia CHIȚU, A. BORDA, *Villa rustica de la Aiud. Câteva observații privind villae-le rustica din Dacia*, In: *Sargetia*, 5, 1968, p. 59-85.