

WRITTEN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ROMAN ROAD NETWORK IN THE PROVINCE OF LOWER MOESIA

Adriana Panaite*

Keywords: *Moesia inferior*, written sources, archaeological sources, inscriptions, itinerary, road, milestone

Summary: In *Moesia inferior* traces of Roman roads are rare. Most of their descriptions belong to the late nineteenth century and were carried out especially by the Shkorpil brothers. Many of the roads thus mentioned do not exist anymore. The aim of this article is to propose the reconstitution of the communication network of the province based on the analysis of literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources. The most important written sources are listed grouped by the type of given information on the roads: definition, types, stages of construction, juridical regime etc. The cartographic sources are the main ones: *Tabula Peutingeriana*, *Itinerarium Antonini*, *Notitia Dignitatum* etc. Epigraphical and archaeological sources are added to these. If the literary or juridical sources, maps, etc. contain general information, valid throughout the Roman Empire, for the reconstitution of the road system of *Moesia Inferior* the most important role is played by inscriptions: the milestone inscriptions, those mentioning military annexes built along the roads or second-ranking soldiers charged with guarding roads. All these data enable not only to outline the routes but also to establish their chronology.

Rezumat: Urme ale drumurilor romane din *Moesia Inferior* sunt foarte puține. Cele mai multe dintre ele aparțin descrierilor făcute spre sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și datorate în special fraților Shkorpil. Multe dintre ele nu se mai păstrează până astăzi. Articolul de față propune reconstituirea rețelei căilor de comunicație ale provinciei pe baza analizei surselor literare, epigrafice și arheologice. Sunt menționate mai multe surse scrise, grupate în funcție de tipul de informație oferit: definiție, tipuri, etape constructive, regim juridic etc. Cele mai importante surse sunt cele cartografice: *Tabula Peutingeriana*, *Itinerarium Antonini*, *Notitia Dignitatum* etc. Acestea li se adaugă sursele epigrafice și cele arheologice. Dacă sursele literare, juridice, cartografice etc conțin informații cu caracter general, valabile pentru tot Imperiul Roman, în reconstituirea sistemului de drumuri din *Moesia Inferior* cel mai important rol îl au inscripțiile de pe stâlpii miliari, cele amintind construcții anexă ridicate de-a lungul drumurilor, sau cele atestând prezența oșterilor însărcinați cu paza acestora. Toate aceste date ne permit schițarea traseelor și cronologia, nu numai a drumurilor principale (*limes*, litoral, paralel cu Dunărea, central-dobrogean) dar și a celor secundare sau locale.

Written sources,¹ represented by historical and geographical writings, travel guides, letters, novels, poems and epigrams are the main source of information on Roman roads. Here we find a wide variety of references that start from design and technical elements extend to the everyday life. Because it is impossible to include all of them we will focus on some of the most important, grouped by the type of information provided.

What is a road and depending on what elements is defined we find out in the writings of Varro, Isidorus and Servius. According to Varro, referring to popular etymology, the term *via* comes from the term *veha*: *rustici atiam nunc quoque viam veham appellant propter vecturas*,² *quod ea vehendo teritur*,³ *qua vehebant viae dictae*.⁴ There are few definitions of the term *via* in written sources and the central element to which they relate is that of paving with stone: *primi autem Poeni dicuntur lapidibus vias stravisse*⁵ or *primi enim Poeni vias lapidibus stravisse ducuntur*.⁶ A second important element in relation with the roads are defined are vehicles: *qua potest ire vehiculum*⁷ or *via dicta a vehiculorum incurso viae privatae*.⁸ If these sources are directly related to the technical characteristics of the road layout, other definitions focus on legal and administrative elements: *publice ire, commear, publice munire: viae sunt ... publicae per «quas»* (the complete formulation according to Ulpianus, Dig. 23: *per quas omnibus commear licet publice ire, commear omnibus licet* and Ulpianus, Dig. 21: *ut la publicae iretur commearetur*), (beginning of the 1st century A.D.)⁹

* Adriana Panaite: "Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest.

¹ Alfieri 1994, pp. 9-22.

² Varro, *Rer. Rust.*, I, 2, 14.

³ Varro, *Rer. Rust.*, V, 22.

⁴ Varro, *Rer. Rust.*, V, 35.

⁵ Isidorus, *Orig.* XV, 16, 6.

⁶ Servius, *Aen.* I, 422.

⁷ Servius, *Aen.*, IV, 405.

⁸ Isidorus, *Orig.*, XV, 16, 4.

⁹ Festus, 508, 20, sgg. L.