
THE MAP OF ROMAN DACIA IN THE RECENT STUDIES

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Abstract: In this paper the author presents the evolution of the cartographic representation of Roman Dacia in the recent studies of archaeology and ancient history, focusing especially on the lacunas and main problems of foreign (non-Romanian) maps, appeared in the last decade in the international scholarship.

Mapping the Roman Empire with its provinces was always an important task not only for scholars, travelers but even for the ancient people who lived in that environment¹. Recent studies on Roman topography², centuriation (*centuriatio*)³ and modern cartography⁴ changed radically our knowledge and especially the visual perception of the Roman Empire, creating new, more detailed and accurate maps of every province. The new international and regional projects on the studies of the Roman Limes⁵ urged also the creation of new and much more adequate maps of the Roman Empire and its provinces. Nevertheless, the cartographic representation of Roman Dacia in the foreign and Romanian literature is still very rhapsodic and full with major mistakes.

By presenting the latest results of the research, this paper will try to answer on a very simple, but uncomfortable question: why we don't have a standard map of Roman Dacia?

Redrawing Dacia: new results

The recent archaeological, topographical and geophysical studies in the last decade changed our knowledge about the Limes Dacicus and also the internal administration and centuriation of Roman Dacia.

¹ Talbert 2010, 252–273.

² Talbert 2012, 163–193. Fodorean 2013, 62–63.

³ Marcu – Cupcea 2011, 543–560.

⁴ In the last decade there were many initiatives for modern cartographic projects, mapping the Roman Empire. The most important are: Pleiades Project (<http://pleiades.stoa.org/>), Stanford Orbis Project (<http://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/space/orbis.html>), Barrington Atlas of Greek and Roman World (digitized version from 2012 – <http://pelagios-project.blogspot.ro/2012/09/a-digital-map-of-roman-empire.html>).

⁵ Danube Limes Project (<http://www.danube-limes.eu/>) or the Roman Limes Route Project (<http://www.limesdacicus.ro/>).

First of all, the inner administration and internal structure of the province are better known, not only due to the chronological details but also by the new topographical elements on the new maps⁶. Our knowledge about the centuriation and the local topography of many Roman settlements (especially the civil town of Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa⁷, Apulum⁸, the auxiliary fortress and the civil town of Porolissum⁹, Arcobadara¹⁰, Napoca¹¹ and Potaissa¹²) show also a fast evolution. Even the highly neglected or just superficially analyzed¹³ rural world of the province represents the focus point of some modern researches¹⁴. The regional studies of some small topographical and geographical units expended also our knowledge and changed some aspects of the cartographic look of Dacia. However, the internal structure and the inner centuration of the province is still not well – known and marked totally conventional, schematically on every Romanian maps¹⁵.

Beside the internal, topographical and toponymical changes and researches the most important progression was made is the Roman Limes studies.

Each side (especially the Western, Northern and Eastern) of the Limes Dacicus is researched and changed. The most important changes appeared especially in the Western part of the Limes, where the international projects¹⁶ from the both side of the Limes (Barbaricum¹⁷ and province too) redrawn the conventional line of the Western border of the province, traditionally marked on maps till Partiscum. The new methodology and field works revealed the possible vexillation fortresses in the Banat area¹⁸, possibly closing an old, secular problem in the historiography. The new researches regarding the archaeological material of that area proved also the plausibility of the Limes – studies in this area¹⁹.

The North – Western part of the limes is also well – researched. Modern researches in the auxiliary fortresses of Dacia Porolissensis (Bologa²⁰, Buciumi²¹, Porolissum²²) had important contributions to the better understanding of this area. The epigraphic project²³ and the intensive field works

of regional museums²⁴ marked also the new “outlook” of the province of Dacia and the topography of it.

The new projects of *Limes Dacicus Orientalis* (LIDOR), *Roman Limes Route Project* and *Granița romană în estul provinciei Dacia*²⁵ deal with the redrawing of the Eastern Limes of Dacia. Due to the intensive field work, geophysical surveys and systematic excavations, our knowledge enriched significantly about the most poorly researched part of the Dacian border²⁶.

The border of Dacia Inferior (and later, Dacia Malvensis) was always a very sensitive topic in historiography. The most disputed part of it – the South – Eastern border of the province (so called *Limes Alutanus* and *Transalutanus*) on which exists only few modern works and researches²⁷. The majority of the fortresses are not well researched in this area.

Summarizing the latest researches and their results, we can conclude that the inner and outer topography of Roman Dacia is investigated after the latest and most modern, interdisciplinary methods, practically redrawing the old map of the province.

New maps, old problems

Although the above presented results would require a new, revised map of Dacia, we can observe a huge variety of wrong maps in academic and popularizing works too. It is important to separate the Romanian academic studies from the international ones, because in the last period we can see a different tendency in the representation of Dacia.

For a long period, the map appeared in the TIR (Tabula Imperii Romani L 34) and in the well – known manual of Mihai Macrea²⁸ was used as the prototype for the representation of Dacia. The main problems appeared on these maps was the inadequate representation of the Limes Dacicus Occidentalis and the Limes Transalutanus. All the maps appeared before 2005 used this two version – or rare, even worst maps, where the ancient province covers the actual territory of Romania²⁹. The publications of Professor Nicolae Gudea marked for decades the representation of Dacia especially in the field of military history³⁰.

In 2005 in Romania appeared the first modern atlas of Roman Dacia³¹, with many thematic maps. Even if the detailed maps are very useful in the map, the small versions are similar to the maps of Macrea³², presenting the Limes Dacicus till Partiscum and the Limes Transalutanus very schematically. The inner limits of the sub – provinces are presented also very superficial. The small maps are in fact the same representation of Dacia made by professor Ioan Piso in 1993³³ which is only slightly different the maps known from

⁶ For the historiography on this topic see: Ardevan 2010, 279–289. About the new toponyms see: Dana – Nemeth 2012, 431–437.

⁷ Marcu – Cupcea 2011, 543–560.

⁸ New projects regarding the topography of the civilian towns: *Arhitectura romană la Apulum. Propuneri de reconstituire a evoluției urbane cu ajutorul aplicațiilor grafice 3D*. Ph. D. thesis – Teodor Muntean, University of Iasi and Apulum Project – Urban and Cultic space in Apulum (<http://diam.uab.ro/index.php?s=10&p=94>).

⁹ Döhner 2011, 93–103, Opreanu – Lăzărescu – Ștefan 2013a, 83–107, Opreanu – Lăzărescu – Ștefan 2013b, 509–524.

¹⁰ Bărbulescu – Nemeth 2008, 107–118.

¹¹ Marcu – Rădeanu 2013.

¹² Fodorean 2013, 42–49.

¹³ Mitrofan 1993, 169–173, Popa 2003

¹⁴ Oltean 2004, 143–165.

¹⁵ About the new researches regarding the inner – administrative structure of the province, see: Ardevan 2010, 288.

¹⁶ Nemeth 2005, Nemeth 2011.

¹⁷ Kulcsár – Istvánovits 2009, 355–369.

¹⁸ About the methodology: Nemeth 2011, 28–41. The new maps: 106–7.

¹⁹ Cronica 2013, 124, 220–223, Grumeza 2013, 413–435.

²⁰ Cronica 2013, 151–152, Marcu, – Cupcea 2013, 569–589.

²¹ Găzdac 2012.

²² See note nr.9.

²³ Written Heritage of the Roman Civilization in Northern Romania. Webpage:

http://hiphi.ubbcluj.ro/written_heritage/index.html

²⁴ Especially the Museum of Sălaj County and Museum of Bistrița Năsăud.

²⁵ http://limes.rdsweb.ro/descriere_en.html

²⁶ About the results, see: Pánczél et al 2011, 173–181, Cronica 2013, 36–7, Pánczél et al 2012, 105–117.

²⁷ Teodor 2013

²⁸ Macrea 1969, 35–39.

²⁹ Carbonara 2012, Smith 2012, 139. subnote.

³⁰ Gudea 1997, 9–15. The author use the same maps even in his new book: Gudea – Lobüscher 2006. A critical review of these representations: Visy 2009, 115–127.

³¹ Bărbulescu 2005

³² Review of the book: Găzdac 2006, 142–148.

³³ Piso 1993, 7.

the earlier works. The representation of Roman Dacia was first of all an ideological – historical and also, rivalry question in the Romanian academic field, simply followed and superficially copied by the international public³⁴.

After 2005 the use of a new representation of Dacia was provoked both from Romanian and international voices³⁵ but the situation seems to be almost the same.

There are three main categories of maps used today: the revised map of Dacia appeared in the Romanian and international literature³⁶, the old and wrong map of Dacia still used by highly quoted or important Romanian and foreign scholars and works³⁷ and the maps used in popularizing works or conference presentations³⁸. Many of the most recently published maps use the same mistakes neglecting the new results of topography, landscape archaeology and Limes studies.

Conclusion

The representation of Dacia in the Romanian and international studies and popularizing works has a long and problematic historiography. Even if the archaeological excavations and interdisciplinary studies redrawn the inner and outer border and topography of Dacia, the new maps published after 2005 often presents the same mistakes and features as the old maps, drawn in a politically influenced period.

For the next generations will be very important to use an adequate map of Roman Dacia and the Roman Empire.

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³⁴ Petculescu's map (school of Bucuresti) from 1999 is almost totally neglected by many of the Romanian scholars: Visy 2009, 124.

³⁵ Nemeth 2005, Visy 2009.

³⁶ John 2008, I. map (Die Römische Reich in 235), Visy 2010, 83–93, Mladenovici 2012, (map. I. The Central Balkans in the Roman times), Găzdac 2012, fig. I.

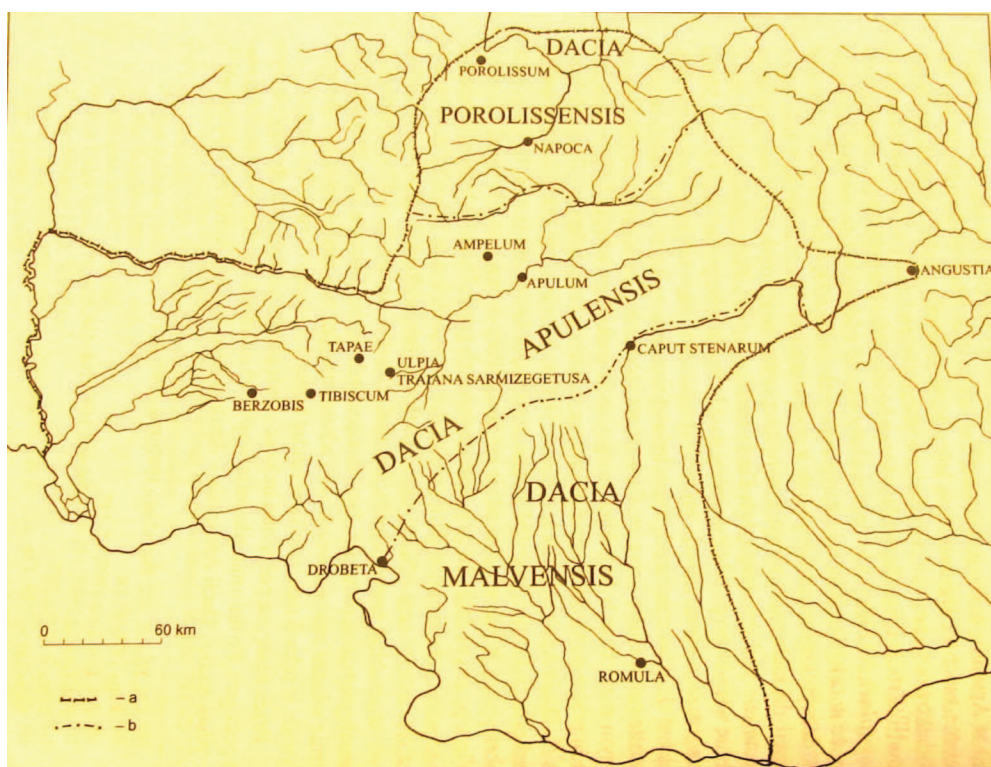
³⁷ Zmudzinski 2007, 24, Marinescu, 2010, 75, De Sena 2011, 963–972. Fig. I., Opreanu 2011, 125–136, fig. I., Weiss 2011, 147. Fig. I.

³⁸ Ardevan – Zerbini 2013, 6.

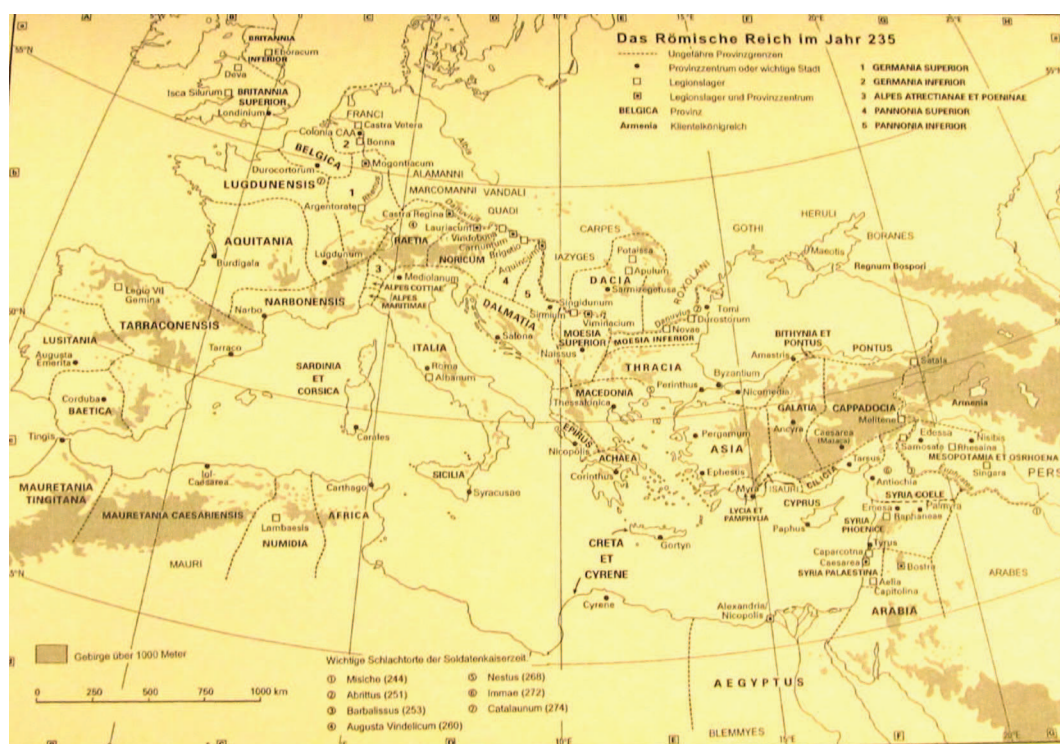
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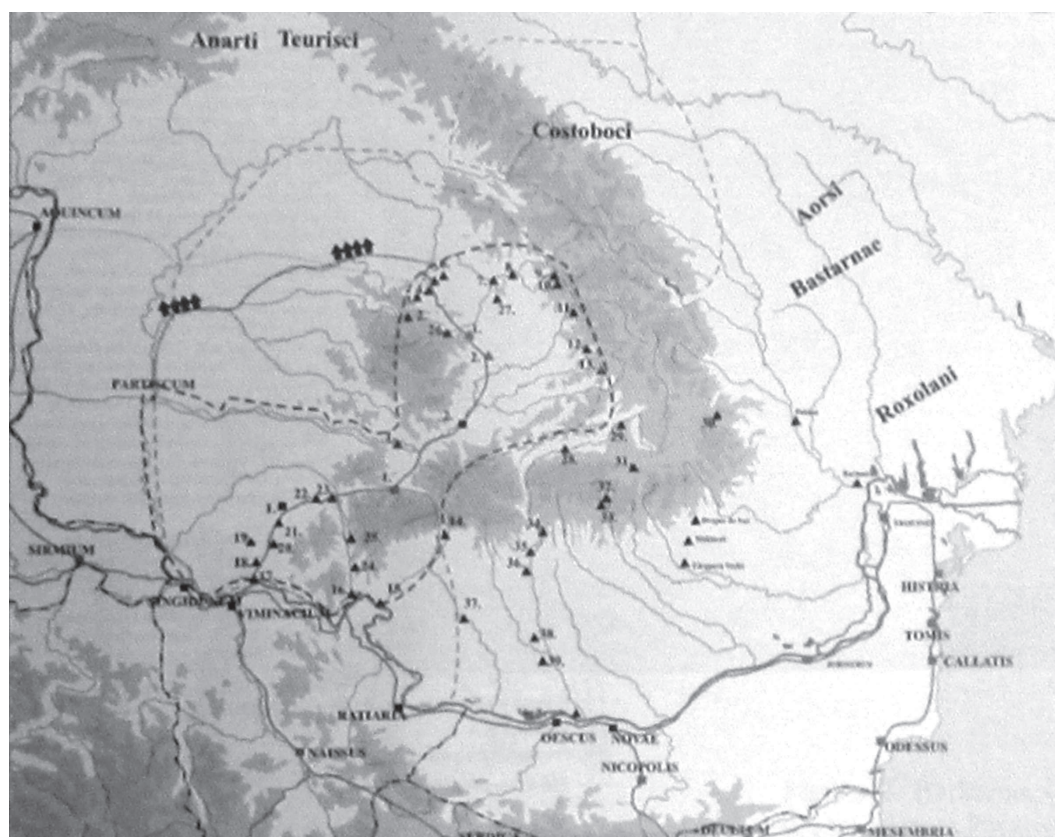
Mussolini's marble map (Via dei Fori Imperiali, Rome)



Zmudzinski 2007, 24.



Johne 2008, I. map



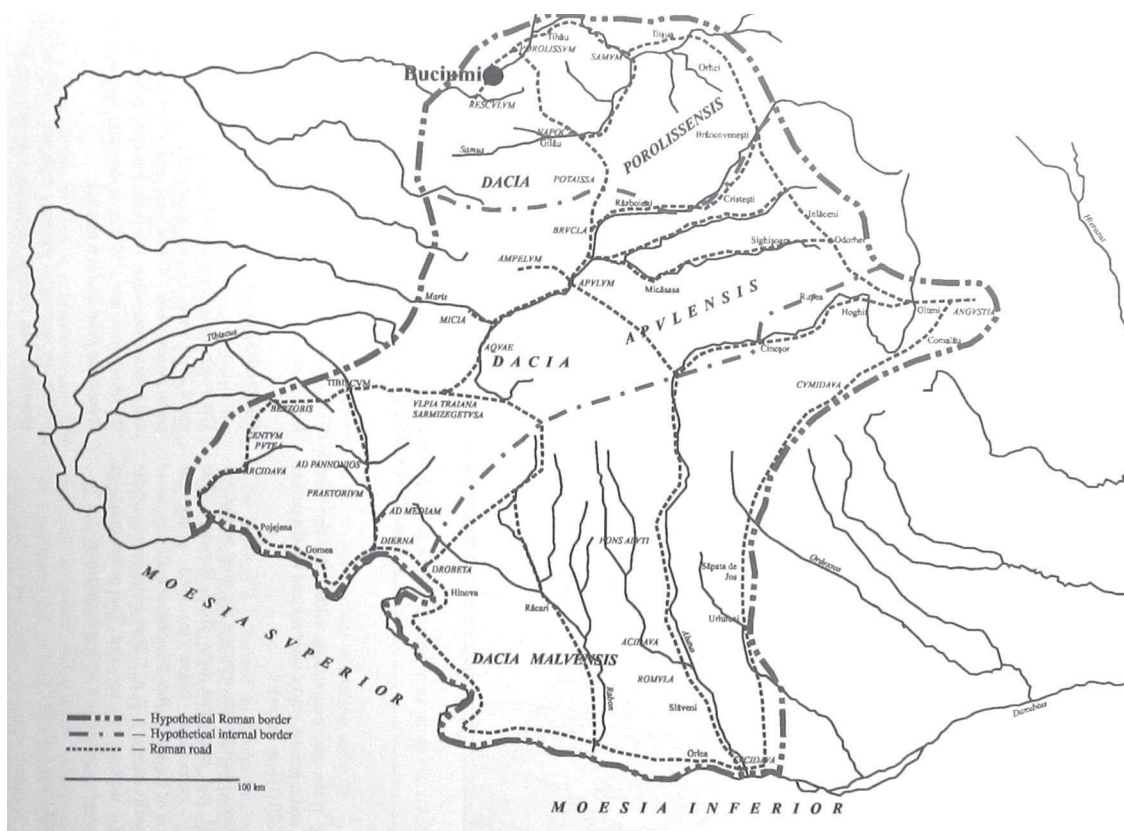
Opreanu 2011, fig. I.



Marinescu 2010, 75.



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