

MAPPING ROMAN DACIA: THE ROAD CONNECTING THE VALLEY OF THE RIVER MUREȘ WITH THE FORT AT CĂLUGĂRENI

Abstract: We are continuing our series of studies regarding the topography of Roman Dacia with this short note regarding the route of the Roman road which connected the valley of the Mureș River with the fort from Călugăreni, located on the Eastern frontier of Roman Dacia. New cartographic data, combined with terrain observations, lead to some important information which allows us to reconstruct the route of this road. It crosses through several current villages, namely Livezeni, Ivănești, Veța, Moșuni, Vărgata, Grăușorul, Dămieni and it reaches the Roman fort in Călugăreni (Mureș County). Our study will detail all the discoveries registered within the area of the settlements mentioned above. By accurately mapping the route of the roman road, we can offer tools for the protection of this important Roman landscape element.

Keywords: *Dacia, Roman road, fort, cartographic evidence, „Trajanos út”.*

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1. SHORT INTRODUCTION

We are continuing our series of studies regarding the topography of Roman Dacia¹ with this short note regarding the route of the Roman road which connected the valley of the Mureș River with the fort from Călugăreni, located on the Eastern frontier of Roman Dacia. This time, we are focusing on a segment of a Roman road which was very important for the road system of Dacia, both economically and strategically.

Some data about this Roman road are known from older contributions,² but these are not so accurate. For example, V. Christescu noted that the route of this road was a branch of the main road along the valley of the Mureș River, and it followed the line of the following settlements: „Niraștau (Nyarađ), Lorința, Ungheeni, Tg. Mureș, Iedu, Chibelin, Moșuni, Iobăgeni, Sân-Mărtin,”³ until the fort from Călugăreni. Short information comes from M. Macrea, but without any details regarding the route of the road.⁴ Let's add to this scarcity in information the fact that we do not know anything about this road coming from the antique cartographic sources.

Regarding the natural landscape, the roman road crosses through the geographic unit entitled the Nirajului Hills, delimited by several alignments, such as the Tirimia-Suplac alignment in the north, the Mureș valley also in

¹ See for this, selectively: FODOREAN 2013a; FODOREAN 2013b, 113-118; FODOREAN/FODOREAN/MOLDOVAN 2013, 37-55; FODOREAN 2015; FODOREAN 2016, 383-387; FODOREAN 2017a, 187-203; FODOREAN 2017b, 909-917.

² FODOREAN 2006, 266-268.

³ CHRISTESCU 1937, 109.

⁴ MACREA 1969, 154.

the north, the alignment Periș-Teleac-Hodoșa-Miercurea Nirajului-Neaua-Sângeorgiu de Pădure in the east and the corridor of Târnava Mică in the south. This geographical unit is characterized by an obvious complexity. The hills are crossed axially by the Niraj Valley, which led to the name of Niraj Hills. The altitudes increase from below 500 m to 600 m in the east. In this sector we can notice the presence of the Niraj Pass, which starts approximately from Miercurea Nirajului and continues until the valley of the Mureș River, with a development on the left of the valley, where there is a large meadow, followed by a few terraces, while the right slope rises quite rapidly southward.

2. NEW DATA CONCERNING THE ROAD

The information we have now at our disposal comes mainly from modern cartographic sources and partially from older Hungarian and German literature regarding the archaeological discoveries from Transylvania.⁵

B. Orbán records the traces of the former Roman road within the area of the village Livezeni.⁶ Further on, towards east, within the territory of the village Ivănești, we have indices of the existence of a former rural settlement. In the point called „Kebelei tető” („Dealul Chibeliei”) fragments of ceramic, bricks and some weapons, together with a bronze statuette, were discovered.⁷

In order to map this point, we have investigated the modern historical map, to see if we can find the toponym „Kebelei tető”. Indeed, we were able to locate this point, using the modern military maps from the first (Fig. 1),⁸ the second (Fig. 2)⁹ and the third military survey (Fig. 3).¹⁰ The settlement East of Ivănești (Kebeleszentivány) is Sânișor (Kebele). Close to Sânișor, in the western part of this village, there is a hill, named in Hungarian „Vargahat Dulő”, translated, on the so-called map no. 3567 „plan directoare de tragere” „dealul lui Varga” (Fig. 4). Following Orbán Balázs’ description, this hill might correspond with the point indicated by the Roman discoveries. If this is the place where a former settlement can be located, then the Roman road can be located at the bottom of this hill, as we indicated on the maps.

Further on, keeping the same direction towards East and north-east, circa 3.7 km away from Ivănești, the traces of the same Roman road were observed during the 19th century by the same O. Balázs within the territory of the village Veța (Vecze).¹¹ Then, keeping again the same direction, the Roman road reaches the current village of Moșuni (Moson). The former Roman road is represented on the modern maps (see Fig. 4) as a secondary road. Again, the traces of the Roman road were observed within the territory of the village

Moșuni by O. Balázs.¹²

From Moșuni, the same modern maps depict a secondary road connecting this village to the next one, which is Iobăgeni (Fig. 5).

More data about this road are related to the route from Vărgata to Călugăreni. The first sector which can be accurately map is the one from Vărgata (*Csikfalva*) and Buza (*Búzaháza*) (nowadays Grăușorul). The toponym which attests the former Roman road is mentioned as on the modern maps from the second and the third military survey, as well as on the map no. 3567 („plan directoare de tragere”) „Trajanos út” (Fig. 6, Fig. 7, Fig. 8). We must outline, and this is available in many other situations, the straightness of this road sector. From Vărgata to Călugăreni (*Mikháza*), the line of the road, measuring almost 7.5 km, is almost straight, oriented from south-west to north-east.

The Roman road is not registered nor in the National Archaeological Repository, neither in the List of the Historical Monuments from Romania.

Direct terrain observations carried out in the last years (Fig. 9, Fig. 10, Fig. 11, Fig. 12, Fig. 13, Fig. 14) did not lead to the discovery of the former road, because it is overlapped by the modern road.

3. SHORT FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Combining data from older literature with the cartographic research, we have been able to reconstruct the route of the Roman road which connected the valley of the Mureș River with the fort from Călugăreni. The road connects the villages Livezeni, Ivănești, Sânișor, Veța, Moșuni, Vărgata, Grăușorul and Dămieni until it reaches the fort. Unfortunately, despite the fact that during the 19th century traces of the road were visible in the field, our current investigations did not conclude in the recognition, in the terrain of former sectors of the road. Anyway, its route was reconstructed using the modern cartographic sources, which are very useful, not only for this case, but in many other situations, when former sites from different periods were recorded by the modern engineers and topographers.

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⁵ BALÁZS 1868-1873; GOOSS 1876.

⁶ BALÁZS 1868-1873, IV, 182; see also GOOSS 1876, 80; BENKŐ 1869, 91; LAZĂR 1995, 172.

⁷ LAZĂR 1995, 172.

⁸ <https://mapire.eu/en/synchron/firstsurvey-transylvania/?bbox=2746198.355257994%2C5866621.29144022%2C2750736.8038102314%2C5869487.68000913&map-list=1&layers=142>.

⁹ <https://mapire.eu/en/synchron/secondsurvey-transylvania/?bbox=2745327.0246451%2C5865884.414927841%2C2754403.921753965%2C5871617.192049229&map-list=1&layers=54>.

¹⁰ <https://mapire.eu/en/synchron/thirdsurvey25000/?bbox=2745327.0246451%2C5865884.414927841%2C2754403.921753965%2C5871617.192049229&map-list=1&layers=129>.

¹¹ BALÁZS 1868-1873, IV, 80; LAZĂR 1995, 183.

¹² BALÁZS 1868-1873, IV, 65; LAZĂR 1995, 183.

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

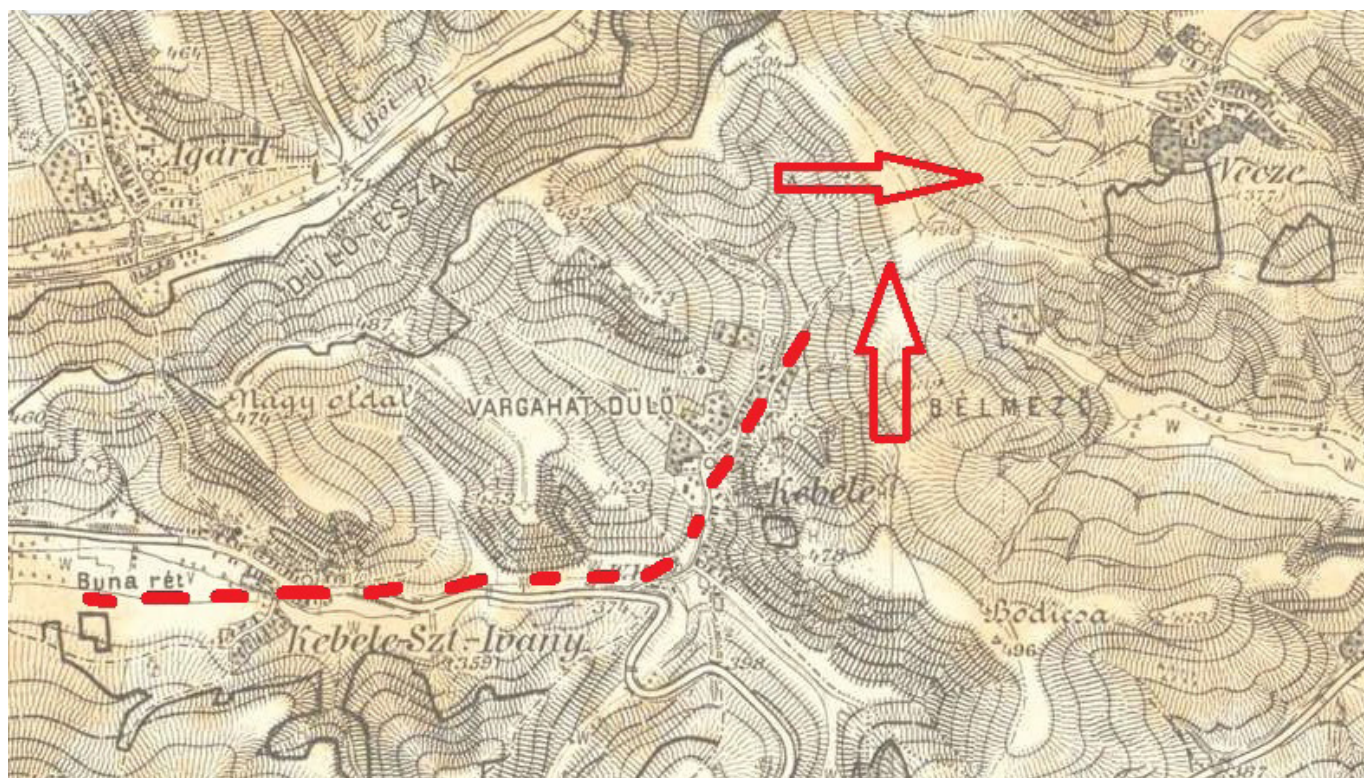


Fig. 8