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Studies

HISTORIOGRAPHY

MAPS OF ROMAN DACIA. II. VICTORIA VASCHIDE AND THE CARTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF DACIA IN 1903

Abstract: We are continuing our series of studies regarding the representation of Dacia in medieval and modern cartography with a discussion related to another map, printed in a book written by Victoria Vaschide, entitled *Histoire de la conquête romaine de la Dacie et des corps d'armée qui y ont pris part*, Paris, Librairie Emile Bouillon, 1903. This is a book which contains a detail analysis of different aspects regarding the conquest of Roman Dacia, including the construction of roads, the organization of the frontier, and the military troops which have participated to the conquest. At the end of the volume, the reader finds a map of Roman Dacia, drawn by the author, entitled "Carte militaire de la Dacie dressée par Victoria Vaschide". We are presenting here some data regarding the topography of Dacia illustrated by this map published in 1903.

Keywords: *Dacia, Roman roads, forts, modern cartography.*

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In 1903, the Emile Bouillon publishing house in Paris printed a book written by Victoria Vaschide about the conquest of Dacia and the military units which participated in these events.¹ The book was published in the collection of the *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études*. It is structured in five chapters. The first one is presenting the geography of Dacia. The second one deals with aspects regarding the conquest of the province, describing the two military campaigns of Trajan north of the Danube. The third part of the book focuses on the troops which participated during the conquest. The legions described here are *legio XIII Gemina*, *legio V Macedonica*, *legio I Adiutrix*, *legio I Minervia*, *legio IIII Flavia*, *legio VII Claudia*. The analysis continues with the presentation of the auxiliary troops. The fourth chapter focuses on the presentation of the defensive system of Dacia Superior and Dacia Inferior. In the final chapter of the book the author debates upon the abandonment of Dacia. The appendix is a useful tool for the reader, because the author presents several categories of sources regarding Domitian's wars, Trajan's wars, some military diplomas and several coins with reference to the Dacian wars.

The accuracy of the representation of Roman Dacia on maps was and it is related to the level of archaeological knowledge regarding the elements of the former landscape: roads, forts, the frontier. Gathering such information was a slowly process, since at the beginning of the 19th century and during this century such representations were very general.²

¹ VASCHIDE 1903.

² See for example, some of these maps: Giovanni Maria Cassini (1745-1824) and Dacia in 1801:

We are interested in this short note to discuss some details regarding the map included at the end of the volume written by Victoria Vaschide. It is entitled “Carte militaire de la Dacie dressée par Victoria Vaschide”. It is drawn at a small scale. It depicts the most important settlements of Roman Dacia, the frontiers of the provinces, the forts and the roads.

1. THE ROADS

The main imperial road is depicted quite accurate. A red line starts at Rama (Lederata, Ram in Serbia), and continues towards north, connecting Arcidava, Zsidovin (Berzovia, Caraş-Severin County), and Aizis with Tibiscum. Another branch starts at Orsova (Orşova, Caraş-Severin County), and continues towards Tibiscum, reaching the settlements Ad Mediam and Plugova.³ These two branches intersect at Tibiscum and the road continues to Sarmizegetusa, Also Varosvize (Orăştioara de Jos, Hunedoara County), Broos (Orăştie Hunedoara County), Apulum, Felvinz (Unirea, Alba County), Szekely Foldvar (Războieni-Cetate), Potaissa, Napoca, Szuczac (Suceag, Cluj County), Magyar Egregy (Românaşi, Sălaj County), Certia (Romita, Sălaj County), ending at Porolissum.⁴

Another road represented in the map is the one connecting Sebes Varalja (Bologa, Cluj County) with Varmézo (Buciumi, Sălaj County) and St. Peterfalva (Bozna, Treznea commune, Sălaj County).

From Napoca, another road is represented along the valley of the river Someşul Mic, on the right bank of the river. The road reaches Szamos Ujvar (Gherla, Cluj County) and then Also Kosaly (Căşieu, Cluj County). This road

³ “La Pannonia la Dacia l’Illyricum e la Moesia” - (57) [La Pannonia la Dacia l’Illyricum e la Mesia. - David Rumsey Historical Map Collection](#); Robert Wilkinson (c. 1768-1825) and Dacia in 1823: “Pannonia, Dacia, Illyricum et Moesia” - [Pannonia, Dacia, Illyricum et Moesia. - David Rumsey Historical Map Collection](#); Adrien Hubert (1786-1832) and Dacia in 1826: “Dacie ancienne, Pannonie, Illyrie, Moesia” - [Dacie ancienne, Pannonie, Illyrie, Moesia. - David Rumsey Historical Map Collection](#); Aaron Jr. Arrowsmith (1802-1854) and Dacia in 1828: “Illyricum, Dacia, Moesia, Macedonia et Thracia” - [Northern Turkey in Europe, with part of Hungary and Dalmatia - David Rumsey Historical Map Collection](#); *The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* and Dacia in 1830: “Ancient Macedonia, Thracia, Illyria, Moesia, and Dacia” - [Ancient Macedonia, Thracia, Illyria, Moesia, and Dacia. - David Rumsey Historical Map Collection](#); Joseph Thomas and Dacia in 1835: “Germania, Dacia” - [Germania, Dacia. - David Rumsey Historical Map Collection](#); “*Orbis Romanus ad Illustranda Itineraria*”: Pierre Lapie (1777-1850) and Dacia in 1845 - FSFCoverTr1 (unc.edu); Karl Spruner von Merz (1803-1892) and Dacia in 1865: “Pannonia, Illyricum, Dacia, Moesia, Thracia, Macedonia, Epirus” - [Pannonia, Illyricum, Dacia, Moesia, Thracia, Macedonia, Epirus. - David Rumsey Historical Map Collection](#); Louis Boneffont (1825-1881) and Dacia in 1868: “Dacia romana a Traiano Aug. Usquead Aureliani Aug. Tempus secundum A. Tr. Lauriani Tabulam Ab Lud; Bonnefort descripta” - [geo-spatial.org: Atlante Geograficū 1868 \(geo-spatial.org\)](#); William Smith (1813-1893) and Dacia in 1874: “Thracia, Moesia, Illyria, Pannonia, Dacia” - [Thracia, Moesia, Illyria, Pannonia, Dacia - David Rumsey Historical Map Collection](#); Johann Gustav Ferdinand Droysen (1838-1908) and Dacia in 1886: “Die unteren Donauländer zur Römerzeit” - [Roman provinces of Illyricum, Macedonia, Dacia, Moesia, Pannonia and Thracia.jpg \(2817x2284\) \(wikimedia.org\)](#).

³ For these two branches: FODOREAN 2006, 227-235.

⁴ Concerning the main imperial road in Dacia: HALAVATS 1896, 12-14; CUCU 1929, 45-52; PANAITESCU 1938; RĂUȚ *et alii* 1977, 135-159; URSUȚ *et alii* 1980, 441-446; URSUȚ *et alii* 1982-1983, 201-206; URSUȚ, PETICĂ 1983, 157-160; WINKLER *et alii* 1980, 63-73; BLĂJAN *et alii* 1994, 167-198; FODOREAN 2013a, 62-67; FODOREAN 2013b, 113-118; FODOREAN *et alii* 2013, 62-67; FODOREAN 2015; FODOREAN 2016, 383-387; FODOREAN 2017, 909-917.

continues along the valley of the river Someşul Mare towards east, connecting Also Ilosva (Ilişua, Bistriţa-Năsăud County) with Varhely Burghallen (Orheiu Bistriţei, Bistriţa-Năsăud County) and Vecs (Brâncoveneşti, Mureş County). From this fort, the road continues along the Mureş river, reaching Maros Keresztur (Cristeşti, Mureş County). From Cristeşti, another road is represented towards east, connecting the forts located along the eastern frontier of Dacia: Mikhaza (Călugăreni, Mureş County), Enlaca (Inlăceni, Harghita), Szekely Udvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc, Harghita County), and Galt (Ungra).

Another road represented in the map is the one connecting Drobeta with Sarmizegetusa. Along this road, a single Roman fort is mentioned, Bumbesti. From Drobeta, a road is depicted towards east, connecting Amutrium with Castra Nova and Romula. Also starting from Drobeta, a road is depicted along the course of the Danube river, via Hinova, Bechet, Celei and Islas (Izlaz).

The road along the Olt river (*limes Alutanus*) starts at Islas (Islaz, Teleorman County) and connects the settlements from Slăveni, Romula, Acidava, Rusidava, Pons Aluti, Buridava, Castra Trajani, Arutela, Rădăcineşti, Pretorium, Pons Vetus, Caput Stenarum, Klein Schenk (Cincşor, Braşov County) and Heviz (Hoghiz, Braşov County).

The *limes Transalutanus* is also depicted in the map. From south to north, the following forts are recorded: Flămânda, Putinei, Băneasa, Valea Urluei (Valea Urluii), Gresia, Ghioca, Urlueni (Urluieni), Isbăşeşti (Fălfani), Săpata de Jos, Albota, Purcăreni, Jidova.

A road is also recorded from Apulum to Ampelum.

Along the valley of the river Mureş, a road is recorded from Apulum towards west, to Veczel (Veţel Hunedoara County). A Roman fort is recorded in Bulcs (Bulci, Arad County).

A road is also represented along the valley of the river Târnava Mică, and another road is depicted along the valley of the river Târnava Mare.

A presumable road is depicted in the map from Bumbesti, via Pons Aluti and Albota to Ploieşti. Also, another presumable road is represented in the map from Novae to Ploieşti. Such road never existed in the Roman times. A connection from Bumbesti towards the *limes Alutanus* and *Transalutanus* is possible, but it has not yet archeologically documented.

To sum up, some of the routes of the roads represented in this cartographic document are quite correctly mapped. Regarding the forts, not all of them are present in the map, but those recorded are correctly positioned.

2. THE TROOPS

Like in the case of the roads, the cartographic information concerning the troops reflects the level of knowledge from the time the book was published. Though, it is strange the mentioning, at Apulum, of the information “Camp de la Leg. XIII. G. depuis 142”. The name of the same legion is recorded, sometimes incorrectly, in other settlements, like Vajda Hunjad (Hunedoara), Also

Varosvize, Sarmizegetusa, Ampelum, Szucxac, Ad Mediam or Also Kosaly. In other cases, the mentioning of the troops in connection with a fort is correct. For example, *ala Silitana* is recorded in Gilău,⁵ *ala II Pannoniorum* is recorded in Gherla,⁶ *cohors I Alpinorum* is recorded in Călugăreni,⁷ or "Coh. IV Cypr. c.r." (*cohors IIII Cypria*) in Bumbești.⁸ *Cohors III Delmatarum* is recorded in Ad Mediam,⁹ therefore it is correct, since Ad Mediam was associated with Mehadia in that period. Also, detachments from *legio V Macedonica* and *legio XIII Gemina* are mentioned in Ad Mediam, which is again correct.¹⁰ Other troops are recorded incorrectly. For example, a "coh. III Britton." is recorded in Cincșor, but the military unit garrisoned here was *cohors II Flavia Bessorum*.¹¹

3. THE FRONTIER

The representation of the frontier of Dacia is quite interesting, especially in the western part of the province, with some errors of course, but also with some correct details, even though the level of knowledge at the beginning of the 20th century was limited. The line of the frontier is marked along the road Dierna-Tibiscum, but Tibiscum is not included in the province. The fort from Veczel is represented close to the western frontier, which is in fact correct.

4. SHORT CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite the level of archaeological knowledge regarding Dacia from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the map included by Victoria Vaschide in her book published in 1903 is quite an accurate one. It reflects the main road infrastructure of Dacia after 106 A.D. and the distribution of troops. Although there are some mistakes mainly related to the presence of troops in certain forts, the depicting of roads is basically correct.

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- ⁵ GUDEA 1997, 100-101; MARCU 2009, 78.
⁶ PROTASE *et alii* 2008, 29-32; GUDEA 1997, 102; MARCU 2009, 71.
⁷ See a discussion about the troop garrisoned here in PÁNCZÉL 2015, 909-916; MARCU 2009, 121.
⁸ MARCU 2009, 120.
⁹ GUDEA 1997, 31-32; MARCU 2009, 142.
¹⁰ MACREA *et alii* 1993, 109-123; NEMETH 2005, 40; MARCU 2009, 142.
¹¹ GUDEA 1997, 67; MARCU 2009, 199.
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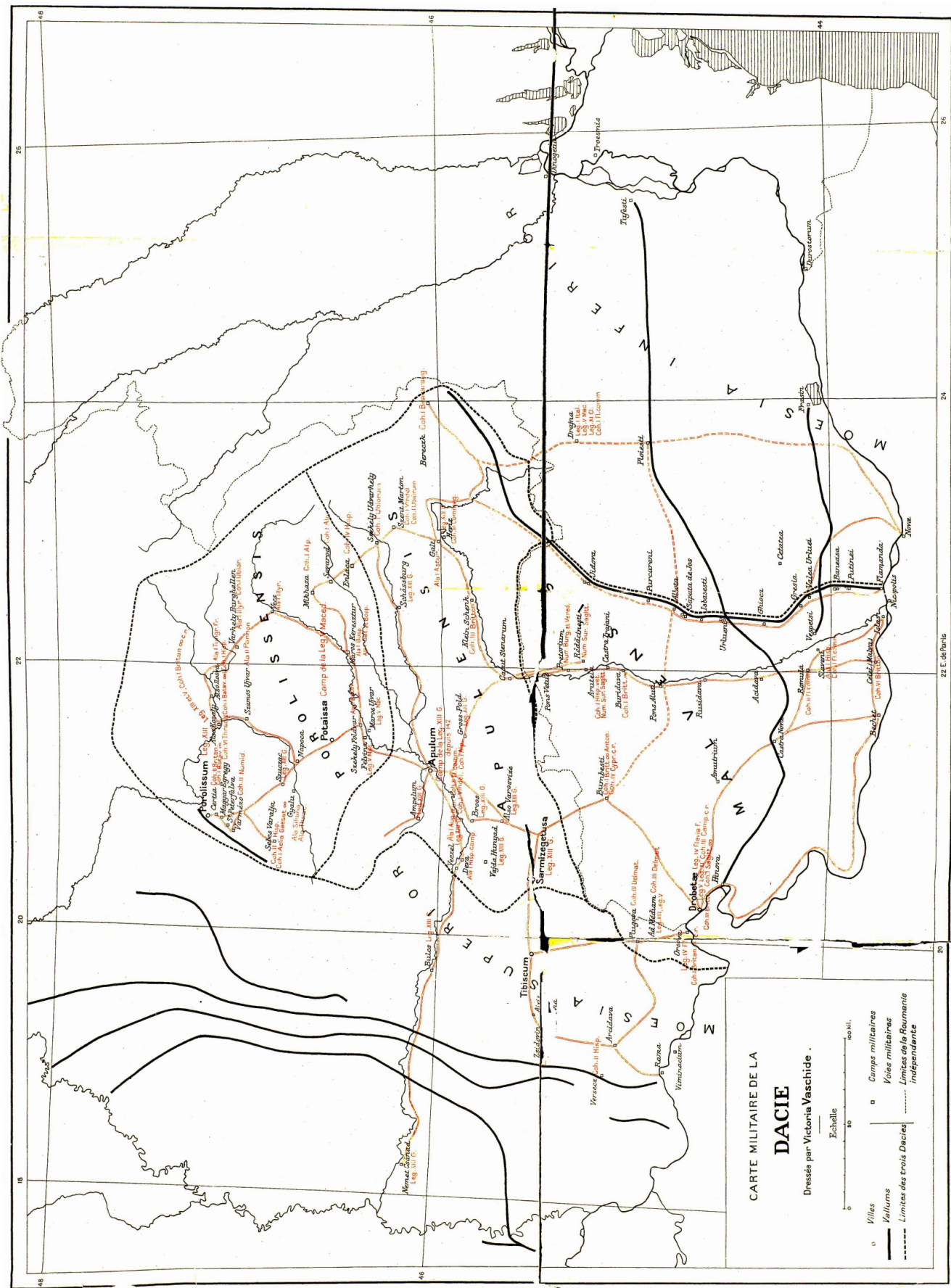


Fig. 1. "Carte militaire de la Dacie dressée par Victoria Vaschide" (after VASCHIDE 1903, 225).