

**HABILITATION THESIS**  
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**Pannonia, Dacia and Moesia in Roman itineraries. A comparative approach**

**ABSTRACT**

The present thesis presents a part of the research activity of the candidate after defending his Ph.D. thesis in 2004 at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of History and Philosophy.

Few provinces of the Roman Empire share such particular features as Dacia, Pannonia and Moesia. Pannonia entered in the attention of the Romans beginning with 35-33 BC. Before that, the Roman interest in this area was focused only on economic resources, such as silver and iron. Pannonia was founded as imperial province of consular rank, under the name of *Illyricum inferius*, sometime after the defeat of the dalmato-pannonic rebellion from 6-9 A.D. After that, between 102 and 106 A.D. Trajan divided it into Pannonia Superior, located upstream on the Danube and provided with three legions, and Pannonia Inferior, further to South-East, with only one legion garrisoned at Aquincum. Moesia developed its own particular history in this area, strongly related to that of Dacia and Pannonia. Mócsy's book published in 1974 (A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia. A History of the Middle Danube Provinces of the Roman Empire*. London and Boston. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974) is the most suggestive example that one cannot treat a subject concerning this particular geographical area separately. Moesia became a Roman province in the last years of Augustus' reign. In the ancient geographical sources, the province was bounded to the east by the *Pontus Euxinus* (Black Sea), to the west by the Drinus (Drina) river, in the north by the Danubius (Danube) and to the south by the *Haemus* (Balkan) and Scardus (Šar) mountains. Today it includes territories from Macedonia, Southern Serbia (Moesia Superior), Northern Bulgaria and Dobrudja (south-east Romania). Dacia is the last province conquered by the Romans. The reasons of Trajan for this action were many. One of them was to secure the river frontier along the Danube. By creating Dacia, this goal was accomplished.

History itself shows numerous moments when these provinces were in danger and defended themselves as a *totum*. The Dacians attacked Moesia during Domitian. The same Dacians crossed the river in the winter 101/102 A.D. In 102 A.D. the troops of Moesia remained in the south-western territories military controlled by the Romans at the end of the first war against the Dacians. In 105 A.D. the *pridianum* of the *cohors I Hispanorum veterana*, from Moesia Inferior, mentions a *vexillatio* of this troop *intra provinciam* (meaning in Moesia Inferior), at *Piroboridava* (along the valley of Siret, at Poiana, Galați county) and *Buridava* (Stolniceni, Vâlcea county). Then, at the beginning of Hadrian's reign, to solve to problems with the Sarmatians, the emperor designated Quintus Marcius Turbo as commander of the armies from Pannonia and Dacia. In 166 A.D., after the most difficult moment in the existence of Dacia as a province (the Marcomanic wars), *legio V Macedonia* was brought from Moesia Inferior at Potaissa, in Dacia Porolissensis. These are some examples which show that in many moments the Danubian provinces cooperated and solved numerous difficult moments.

These are data related to military history, the one which "connects" these provinces together. But other features can be analyzed as a whole. That is why I decided, throughout this thesis, to pursue an in-depth investigation concerning the representation of this geographical space in the Roman itineraries. Regional investigations like this can offer interesting results, as A. Mócsy noted: "One of the chief problems in the study of the history of the Roman Empire is that research relating to the empire as a whole is not organically interconnected with that relating to its parts. A daunting gap separates the study of central Roman imperial history from local, often highly developed, archaeological research. This gap may be bridged only by the use of a method which explores every aspect period by period and in accordance with historical principles" (A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia. A History of the Middle Danube Provinces of the Roman Empire*. London and Boston. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, *Preface*, XIX). Applied, or transposed towards the knowledge concerning the Roman itineraries, Mócsy's statement is perfectly sustainable. After more

than one century of scientific productions focused on the Roman itineraries, one can observe that we are still far away from solving not only detailed aspects, but general statements. The Peutinger map and its dating is still today a problem, generating intense debates. The same statement is available for the Antonine itinerary.

The idea to write this habilitation thesis started from several fundamental questions: 1. Are the Peutinger map and the Antonine itinerary different in information related to Pannonia, Dacia and Moesia? 2. Why Dacia is not listed in the Antonine itinerary? 3. How other late sources, such as *Notitia Dignitatum*, the Bordeaux itinerary, or the Cosmography of the Anonymous from Ravenna, presented or described these regions? 4. How the Peutinger map and the Antonine itinerary were actually compiled? 5. By analyzing these provinces, can I obtain new information useful to date these documents? 6. So far, to date these documents, historians discussed them as a whole or separately, focusing on small, sometimes insignificant details from a certain area. What other methodological criteria or means can I use, beside the classical, known methods, to provide new data? 7. Can I differentiate between the purpose of creation of *Tabula Peutingeriana* and *Itinerarium Antonini*? 8. Supposing I can identify new dating criteria, will they be useful to extend, and apply my method for other regions, and finally for the entire former Roman provinces?

In my habilitation thesis, I analyze and compare the important document concerning travel in the Roman world: the Peutinger map and the Antonine itinerary, together with other antique sources and information from the modern literature. I also use data regarding other ancient sources, such as the Bordeaux itinerary, *Notitia Dignitatum*, of the Ravenna Geographer. To provide new insights with focus on the Peutinger map and the Antonine itinerary, I apply a new method: I compare the distances. The Antonine itinerary lists distances with values higher than the Peutinger map: 20 to 30 miles, while in the Tabula the distances are much smaller: 8 to 16 miles. My demonstration focuses on three important Danubian provinces: Pannonia, Moesia and Dacia. All three had an important military role in the Balkans. So I conclude that in the case of the Peutinger map, at least for these three provinces, the map-maker used early, military itineraries to compile the document. The redactor of the Antonine itinerary used, instead, official late documents from the state archives, related to *cursus publicus*. Using the facilities and the logistic offered by the state, it was normal for a traveler to cover bigger distances, of 20, 25, 30 miles. In the case of the Peutinger map, the values of the distances reflect, in my opinion, the distances covered by the marching armies, when they conquered new territories, so, obvious, these values are smaller, in many cases of 12 miles. I will extend, in the future, this theory and this method, and I intend to investigate all the territories depicted or listed in these two outstanding documents.

The habilitation thesis is structured in nine chapters. Each province is presented, separately. The Parts 2.2., 2.3, and 2.4 are brief descriptions of each province: Pannonia, Dacia and Moesia. Each presentation follows the same pattern. I tried to highlight some features for these provinces: 1. the models of conquest; 2. the organization of the military infrastructure; 3. their administration structure. Section 2.5. presents a history of the researches concerning the information from Roman itineraries in each province. Within the sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 I investigated all available data regarding the ancient cartographic sources. Section 2.6 presents the situation for Pannonia. The reader will observe that for this province the majority of information available is related to the limes road along the Danube. For the settlements listed or depicted inside the province, few data are nowadays available. Even the archaeology cannot help too much, because of the lack of field investigations. Section 2.7 is dedicated to the province of Dacia. I presented the data concerning the representation of this province in the Peutinger map. I tried to locate, where I found accurate data, the ancient place-names. I described each road sector separately. I used in my analysis data offered by other sources: the Trajan's column, the Cosmography from Ravenna, and archaeological data. The same method was used to present the Roman itineraries from Moesia, in section 2.8.

In section 2.9 I resume, analyze and interpret all data available. The conclusions provide new insights regarding the purposes, the historical context, the origins and the role of the most important Roman itineraries with direct reference to the geographical space that I have chosen for my research.