

## *Viae militaris* in Dacia during Trajan

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- abstract -

Our contribution is focused on the aspects regarding the construction of the Roman roads in Dacia during the immediate moments after the conquest of the province. At the beginning of our study we discussed the signification of the term *via militaris*. Historians and researchers such as Albert Grenier, Raymond Chevalier, Thomas Pekary, Pierre Fustier and others have emphasized the role of the roads in the Roman Empire. Th. Pekary thought that these *viae militaris* were strategic roads, which connected Rome with the capitals of the provinces and the Roman garrisons. R. Chevallier considered these roads “*des routes d'intérêt stratégique construites aux frais du trésor militaire*”.

We also discussed some scenes on the Trajan's Column with direct reference to road construction. During the second war against the Dacians, the soldiers from the Roman legions already built the main roads of Dacia.

Another very important source that proves the rapid organization of the Roman road system immediately after the conquest of Dacia is the Roman milestone found at Aiton (Cluj county). This milestone, discovered in 1758, is one of the most important, because it offers an image of the rapid rhythm in which the Romans built the roads of Dacia. The text of the inscription mentions that in the sector *Potaissa – Napoca*, belonging to the imperial Roman road, and built by the Roman auxiliary troop *cohors I Flavia Ulpia Hispanorum miliaria civium Romanorum equitata*, was set down this milestone, at the distance of 10 *millia passuum* from *Potaissa* (14.785 km). Thus, according to the text of the milestone, this sector of road was already built in 108 AD. The second aspect is the fact that the inscription of the milestone from Aiton offers the first epigraphic mention of *Potaissa*. We have discussed the concept of *via militaris*, trying to answer to the question: can be considerate the Roman road *Potaissa - Napoca* a *via militaris*? The answer was given by trying to analyze the signification of this term. We reached a conclusion: the Roman imperial road *Potaissa – Napoca* can be named a military road at least for two reasons. First of all, we have numerous examples, which mention in inscriptions the name of many military units that have effectively participated to the construction and restoration of the roads. We have offered here an example: the inscription of a *milliarium* discovered in the Northern Africa mentions that in the year 123 A.D., during emperor Hadrianus, the *legio III Augusta* built the Roman road from Carthage to Theveste. Then, the fact that the inscription of the milestone from Aiton confirms that soldiers from *cohors I Flavia Ulpia Hispanorum miliaria civium Romanorum equitata* have built, at Trajan's orders, the sector of the Roman road between *Potaissa* and *Napoca*, demonstrates that this was a road built immediately after the conquest of Dacia, by the army and for the needs of the army.

In order to complete our discussion, we reserved some space in our study to the problem of the signification of the toponyms. We have, in Dacia, many examples of Roman roads denominated “drumul lui Traian”, “Trajans weg”, “drumul împăratului”, “calea lui Traian” etc. These examples can be used as a strong argument in order to sustain that the main roads of Dacia were constructed immediately after the conquest of the province.

Another category of sources, the Austrian military maps, provides us important information concerning certain routes (*Sarmizegetusa - Ostrov, Turda - Bogata - Călărași*).

We have presented the main military roads built during Trajan's reign:

1. *Lederata-Tibiscum*;
2. *Dierna-Tibiscum*;
3. *Tibiscum - Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa – Apulum – Potaissa – Napoca -Porolissum*;
4. the Roman road alongside the valley of Olt;
5. the Roman road *Drobeta – Bumbesti – the Vâlcan pass – Sarmizegetusa*.

At the end of our study we will present some aspects regarding the activity of Trajan in other provinces, related to the construction of roads.