

TABULA PEUTINGERIANA AND THE PROVINCE OF DACIA

"By their maps you shall know them".

William H. Stall

In 1507 Konrad Celtes found a large scroll of parchment in a monastery in southern Germany. In his will, Celtes donated the scroll to his friend Konrad Peutinger, minister of the Emperor Maximilian I and chancellor of the city of Augsburg. Nevertheless the map has been known under Peutinger's name ever since¹. The map was published for the first time in 1598 by Marcus Walser, a relative of Konrad Peutinger². This *itinerarium* was drawn in the twelfth or early thirteenth century, being a copy of an ancient Roman road map. It must have been originally a single large scroll (approximately 34 cm wide and 7 m long). There is certainly no concept of scale. The beginning of the map, containing the extreme West, with parts of Northern Africa, Spain and Britain, was already missing when our copy was made. The *itinerarium* is foreshortened from North to South and elongated from East to West. A seated personification of Rome is displayed in a nimbus in the very center, both horizontally and vertically.

The document mentions the main roads, the stations, the crossroads, the watercourses, the major mountains and rivers inside and outside the Roman Empire (for example Persia or India). The dominant feature is the display of the network land routes through a diagram of angular lines, in which distances between places are indicated. In the central part of the Empire, distances are given in *millia passuum*, but in Gaul they are measured in *leugae*, in Persia in *parasangae* and in Greece in *stadia*.

Three cities, Rome, Constantinople and Antioch, are presented as impersonated allegories³. Six cities are depicted as walled precincts, containing buildings inside: Ravenna, Aquileia, Thessalonica, Nicomedia, Nicaea and Ancyra. Most places are represented by "double tower" vignettes. There are also vignettes that display bath complexes, granaries, headquarters (*praetoria*) and temples.

In a recent study, Kai Brodersen⁴ demonstrated, by taking into account the most important cartographic evidence (Greek maps, the sixth century AD Byzantine Madaba Map,

We used the following abbreviations:

Benea 1999 = D. Benea, *Dacia sud-vestică în secolele III-IV. Interferențe spirituale*, Timișoara 1999.
 Castagnoli 1993 = F. Castagnoli, *L'orientamento nella cartografia greca e romana*, in *Topografia antica. Un metodo di studio*. Il. Italia, Roma 1993, 953-962.

Levi and Levi 1967 = A. Levi, M. Levi, *Itineraria picta. Contributto allo studio della Tabula Peutingeriana. Studi e materiali del Museo dell'Impero Romano 7*, Roma 1967.

Lodovisi and Torresani 1996 = A. Lodovisi, S. Torresani, *Storia della cartografia*, Bologna 1996.

Miller 1916 = K. Miller, *Itineraria Romana. Römische Reisewege an Hand der Tabula Peutingeriana*, Stuttgart 1916.

Tudor 1968 = D. Tudor, *Oltenia romană*, IIIrd edition, București 1968.

Weber 1976 = E. Weber, *Tabula Peutingeriana. Codex Vindobonensis 324. Kommentar*, Graz 1976.

¹ E. Weber, *Zur datierung der Tabula Peutingeriana*, in *Labor Omnibus Unus. Gerold Walser zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von freunden, kollegen und schülern*, Stuttgart 1989, 113-117.

² Weber 1976, 9.

³ E. Weber, *Die Tabula Peutingeriana*, in *Antike Welt. Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte* 15, 1, 1984, 4-5. I had the chance to read this article thanks to Professor Ekkehard Weber, which sent me some of his articles on *Tabula Peutingeriana*; I would like to thank him for his kindness.

⁴ K. Brodersen, *The presentation of geographical knowledge for travel and transport in the Roman world. Itineraria non tantum adnotata sed etiam picta*, in *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire*, edited by Colin Adams and Ray Laurence, Routledge Ed., London-New York 2001, 7-21.

the four second-century AD Vicarello goblets, the so-called Dura Shield, a third-century AD leather fragment from Dura Europos, the first-century BC papyrus from Antaiupolis in Upper Egypt), that Romans had a strong itinerary tradition, but they did not realize scale maps.

The age of the Roman original for *Tabula Peutingeriana* is unclear. As Kai Brodersen⁵ and Benet Salway⁶ emphasized, this map “does list monuments of Alexander the Great (fourth century BC) and Pompeii (destroyed in AD 79), but it also shows Constantinople (founded in the fourth century AD) and a number of pilgrim’s stations, such as the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and St Peter’s cathedral in Rome”. Another element in contradiction with the fourth-century features is the inclusion of routes for trans-Danubian Dacia (*segm.* VI 3-VII 3), as well as the Eastern half of Agri Decumates, which were both lost to the Empire in the second half of the third century. Salway concludes that “this variegated nature of the information makes the attempt to date the whole on the basis of the omission, inclusion or highlighting of any particular location a fruitless exercise”⁷. In his opinion these incongruities are related to the fact that TP was not an official map, but the work of some private individual, who was not well informed about every area of the Empire.

The most complete publication of TP belongs to Konrad Miller⁸. He dated the Roman *itinerarium* on the basis of the personified representations of Rome (IV 5), Constantinople (VII 1) and Antioch (IX, 4-5) in the fourth century AD. He identified the emperors in whose time this map was made as being Valentinianus, Valens and the usurper Procopius. So, in Miller’s opinion, *Tabula* was elaborated between September 365 and May 366. Miller’s arguments are: 1. the existence on the map of Constantinople city, founded by Constantine the Great in AD 324; 2. the presence of St Peter’s church in Rome (*Ad Sanctum Petrum*), built in AD 322; 3. the mention of Nicaea, otherwise an unimportant place before the *concilium* from AD 325; 4. the presence of the Apollo’s temple at Antioch, rebuilt in AD 362. The same opinion was generally shared by Luciano Bosio⁹ and Claude Nicolet¹⁰.

Ekkehard Weber, one of the most important exegetes of the *Tabula*, reached the conclusion that the original of the map must date from an even later period, in the times of Theodosius II¹¹. He even ventured to give a precise year for it, AD 435. In his opinion its sources were: 1. the map produced by Agrippa for Augustus and 2. the itinerary of Caracalla¹².

Annalina and Mario Levi considered that the main source for *Tabula Peutingeriana* was a map elaborated under Septimius Severus, and adapted at the end of the fourth century or at the beginning of the fifth century AD. They started their study with an analysis of the vignettes and came to the conclusion that these drawings have no particular significance as far as the status or the importance of the cities is concerned. Most of them represent *mansiones* belonging to the Roman postal service, *cursus publicus*, which was reorganized under Septimius Severus. Therefore, they suppose that TP had two distinct drafting stages, the first in the Severian period and the second in the fifth century AD¹³.

⁵ K. Brodersen, op. cit., 18.

⁶ B. Salway, *Travel, itineraria and tabellaria*, in *Travel and Geography in the Roman Empire*, edited by Colin Adams and Ray Laurence, Routledge Ed., London-New York 2001, 28-32.

⁷ B. Salway, op. cit., 44.

⁸ Miller 1916.

⁹ L. Bosio, *La Tabula Peutingeriana. Una descrizione pittorica del mondo antico*, Rimini 1983, 154-156.

¹⁰ Cl. Nicolet, *L'inventario del mondo. Geografia e politica alle origini dell'Impero Romano*, Edizioni Laterza, Bari 1989, 100-101.

¹¹ Weber 1976, 10-14.

¹² Weber 1976, 22; Idem, *Eine neue ausgabe der Tabula Peutingeriana*, in *Akten des XI. Internationalen Limeskongresses*, Ed. J. Fitz, Budapest 1978, 654.

¹³ Levi and Levi 1967, 172-173.

A similar opinion was shared by Raymond Chevallier¹⁴, who considers that in a first stage *Tabula Peutingeriana* was compiled in the West during the third century AD. The second drafting stage must be placed at the end of the fourth century AD and the beginning of the fifth century AD.

M. Besnier dated the main source for *Tabula Peutingeriana* later than Ptolemy's *Geography* but before the year AD 250¹⁵. E. Manni also concluded, on the basis of the information regarding the Rhine frontier that the original map can not be dated before AD 260¹⁶, and Victor V. von Hagen stated that TP was first compiled in the times of Traianus Decius, around AD 250¹⁷.

In this respect a brief discussion regarding the sources for the territory of the Dacian province (*segm.* VII and VIII, according to K. Miller's numbering) can be of real interest. Three roads are marked here: Lederata-Tibiscum, Dierna-Tibiscum-Sarmizegetusa-Apulum-Napoca-Porolissum and Drobeta-Romula-Caput Stenarum-Apulum. Sarmizegetusa and Aquae are not connected to any road, albeit after the name of the first locality appears the distance to the next one (XVIII MP) (Fig. 1).

Five localities are represented with vignettes: "*Tivisco, Sarmategte, Apula, Napoca, and Porolisso*". Ad Aquas is represented with a special vignette, corresponding to the thermal constructions (Fig. 2). The other localities, villages or *mansiones*, are marked only with their names and the distance between them.

The distances and places mentioned in Dacia are:

1. *Segmentum* VII 2: Lederata-XII MP; Apus flumen-XII MP; Arcidava-XII MP; Centum Putea-XII MP; Bersovia-XII MP; Azizis-III MP; Caput Bubali-X MP; Tivisco (represented with vignette). There are eight localities and the total distance between them is 73 MP.

2. *Segmentum* VII 3 and VIII 1: Faliatis (Taliata)-XX MP; Tierva-XI MP; Ad Mediam-XVIII MP; Pretorio-IX MP; Ad Pannonios-IX MP; Gaganis-XI MP; Masclianis-XVIII MP; Tivisco-XVIII MP; Agnavie-VIII MP; Ponte Augusti-XV MP; Sarmategte-XVIII MP; Ad Aquas-XIII MP; Petris-VIII MP; Germizera-VIII MP; Blandiana-VIII MP; Apula-XII MP; Brucla-XII MP; Salinis-XII MP; Patavissa-XXVIII MP; Napoca-XVI MP; Optatiana-X MP; Largiana-XVII MP; Cersie-III MP; Porolisso. 24 localities are mentioned here and the total distance between them is 285 MP.

3. *Segmentum* VII 4, VII 5 and VIII 1: Drubetis-XXXVI MP; Amutria-XXXV MP; Pelendova-XX; Castris Novis-LXX MP; Romula-XIII MP; Acidava-XXVIII MP; Rusidava-XVIII MP; Ponte Aluti-XIII MP; Burridava-XII MP; Castra Tragana-VIII MP; Arutela-XV MP; Pretorio-VIII MP; Ponte Vetere-XLIII MP; Stenarum-XII MP; Cedonie-XXVIII MP; Acidava-XV MP; Apula. 17 localities are mentioned here and a total distance of 365 MP.

To sum up, 49 localities are mentioned in Dacia, maybe 48 ("*Tivisco*" appears twice). The total length of the roads is of 723 MP (almost 1070 kilometers). Most of the place names are given in the ablative case, and some are corrupt, such as "*Sarmategte*" instead of Sarmizegetusa. Alexandru Diaconescu has shown in a recent study that successive copyists of the map made several mistakes concerning the distances, mainly by omitting an X or an I¹⁸.

Five rivers are represented within the province of Dacia, but only one is named: *Apus flumen*. The names of some Sarmatic populations to the West are mentioned – *Amaxobii*

¹⁴ R. Chevallier, *Les voies romaines*, Paris 1972, 30.

¹⁵ M. Besnier, *Histoire ancienne. III^{ème} partie. Histoire romaine, tom IV, I^{ère} partie. L'Empire romaine de l'avènement des Sévères au Concile de Nicée*, Paris 1937, 62.

¹⁶ E. Manni, *L'impero di Gallieno*, Roma 1949, 30-31.

¹⁷ V. W. von Hagen, *Le grandi strade di Roma nel mondo*, Rome 1978, 14.

¹⁸ Al. Diaconescu, *Dacia under Trajan. Some observation on Roman tactics and strategy*, AMN 34, 1997, 14. D. Tudor (1968, 57) noticed a similar mistake for the main Roman road in Oltenia (South-East Dacia). We intend to dedicate a separate study to this problem.

Sarmatae, *Lupiones Sarmatae* and *Ulnavi Sarmatae*. The *Alpes Bastarnice* (the Carpathian Mountains) are placed to the North. Beyond these mountains *Bastarni* are mentioned to the East, and also *Dac(i) Petoporiani*.

C. Daicoviciu is the first Romanian scholar who made the attempt to date the source of the Dacian *itinerarium*¹⁹. Starting from the observation that the Eastern part of Roman Dacia does not appear on the map, he dated the document in between AD 251-AD 271, when this part of the province must have already been abandoned. But archaeological research from the last six decades proved that Dacia was not abandoned (neither entirely, nor in certain parts) in the times of Gallienus, but during the reign of Aurelian. Therefore, Daicoviciu's theory is no longer valid, even though it was largely accepted at that time. A similar opinion was expressed in the first volume of *Istoria României*, published in 1960 (see p. 465): the map was compiled in the fourth century AD and it had a model from the sixth decade of the third century AD. Other Romanian prominent scholars of the same generation, such as D. Tudor²⁰, M. Macrea²¹ and later Andrei Aricescu²² and Marin Popescu-Spineni²³ shared the same point of view. O. Răuț, O. Bozu and R. Petrovsky also expressed the same opinion basically, in a paper concerning the Roman road system in Banat (south-west Dacia)²⁴.

As far as Dobrudja is concerned (a part of Moesia Inferior, later Scythia Minor), Alexandru Suceveanu and Iuliana Barnea compared the data from *Tabula Peutingeriana* with the information contained in *Itinerarium Antonini* (the segment for Dacia did not survive), and came upon the conclusion that the core of the data in TP is Severan in date²⁵. They still held as possible the idea that *Itinerarium Antonini* was updated in the times of Diocletian and that the *Tabula Peutingeriana* underwent the same process in the times of Theodosius II.

As for Dacia, Doina Benea has a particular opinion concerning the date of TP. In essence, she agrees with dating TP in the fourth century AD or the fifth century AD, but she tries to prove that the Dacian sector of this map dates from the same period²⁶. Her arguments are: 1. Dacia was not totally abandoned after Aurelian's withdrawal; the Romans kept a certain military and judicial control over the trans-Danubian territories; 2. The cities represented with vignettes (*Tivisco*, *Sarmategte*, *Apula*, *Napoca* and *Porolisso*) suggest that the Dacia's main road was maintained in use because of economic reasons: to enable the access to the gold mines in the Apuseni Mountains, to the salt mines from Potaissa and to iron resources from Banat; 3. The archaeological discoveries from the South-Western Dacia attest that some fortified places continued to function in the fourth century AD, alongside with rural settlements²⁷; 4. The place names

¹⁹ C. Daicoviciu, Problema continuității în Dacia (Die Kontinuitätsfrage in Dazien), AISC III (1936-1940), 1941, 253-254; Idem, La Transylvanie dans l'antiquité, 2, București 1945, 184, n. 2; Idem, Harta lui Peutinger, în Izvoare privind istoria României I, București 1964, 737.

²⁰ Tudor 1968, 50.

²¹ M. Macrea, Viața în Dacia romană, București 1969, 52.

²² A. Aricescu, Armata în Dobrogea romană, București 1977, 134.

²³ M. Popescu-Spineni, România în izvoarele geografice și cartografice, București 1978, 80.

²⁴ O. Răuț, O. Bozu, R. Petrovsky, Drumurile romane în Banat, Banatica 4, 1977, 138.

²⁵ Al. Suceveanu, I. Barnea, Contributions à l'histoire des villes romaines de la Dobroudja, Dacia N. S. 37, 1993, 171, n. 112.

²⁶ Benea 1999, 138-154; Eadem, On the Praetorium Toponyms in Roman Dacia, in Daker und Römer am anfang des 2. Jh. N. Chr. Im norden der Donau (Daci și romani la începutul secolului al II-lea d. Hr. la nordul Dunării), Timișoara 2000, 117-123; Eadem, Dacia pe Tabula Peutingeriana, in In memoriam Dumitru Tudor, Timișoara 2001, 135-149; Eadem, Câteva observații privind așezările din Dacia amintite pe Tabula Peutingeriana, in Studia archaeologica et historica Nicolae Gudea dicata. Omagiu profesorului Nicolae Gudea la 60 de ani, Zalău 2001, 285-300.

²⁷ Eadem, Dacia pe Tabula..., 141.

mentioned in Dacia have a corrupt form, specific to the late Roman period; 5. The reuse of several epigraphic monuments proves that Dacia remained under Roman military control after AD 275. In the book published in 1999, Doina Benea advances the possibility for the five vignettes corresponding to the mentioned cities to attest that these localities were Christian centers of bigger importance than the others²⁸. In her opinion, the Roman imperial roads remained in function in the fourth century AD and that is why they were represented on TP, the Roman *itinerarium* being a military map in the first place. Does TP reflect, for Dacia, a fourth-century AD reality or are we dealing with an error of the copyist? Doinea Benea thinks that the answer to this question is related to the absence of the Eastern part of the province. This absence reflects, in her opinion, a *de facto* situation meaning that the Romans did not use the road system in Eastern Dacia, because this territory was occupied by the population belonging to the Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov culture. If we were to accept this point of view, we would have to admit that the same cities survived till the seventh century AD, when they are mentioned as such by the Geographer from Ravenna. In fact, early documents were currently copied by the Romans, although they did not correspond to any present reality. For instance the town of Pompeii in central Italy is mentioned on TP although it was destroyed in AD 79!

C. C. Petolescu has recently reached another conclusion²⁹. He considered that the vignettes are related to the importance of the localities in the life of the province: Tibiscum-important crossroad in Banat; Sarmizegetusa-the capital of Dacia; Apulum-the headquarter of *legio XIII Gemina*; Napoca-*municipium Hadrianum*, then *Colonia Aurelia* and the residence of the *procurator Daciae Porolissensis*; Porolissum-the key of the Roman defensive system of the Northern frontier, and *municipium Septimium*. He further argued that since Tibiscum is mentioned twice, both on *Tabula* and in Ptolemy's *Geography*, this latter should have represented the prototype for TP. Therefore, he dates the document in the first half of the second century AD, more probably in the times of Hadrian.

In fact Ptolemy's *Geography* is not an *itinerarium* and any direct relation between the two documents is quite improbable. The fact that they display the same mistake of mentioning Tibiscum twice only proves that the error was generalized by the end of Hadrian's reign. Tibiscum is mentioned once as an important station on the main imperial road (*Segmentum* VII 3), and then separately on the road which led from Lederata through Bersobia to Tibiscum (*Segmentum* VII 2). Although there were made archaeological researches on this sector of the limes, we don't know for sure yet if this road was used after the withdrawal of the *legio III Flavia Felix* or was abandoned by the army at the beginning of Hadrian's reign³⁰. One or two decades later it was integrated in some map (maybe an official one), but it was not linked to the main imperial road and was treated separately. This map must have been one of the sources used by Ptolemy, who combined several pieces of information on Dacia. What is worth mentioning is that by the time Ptolemy wrote his *Geography* (between AD 140-150), a map of Roman Dacia was in use and it contained the error of mentioning Tibiscum twice.

Such regional *itineraria* were intensively used by Romans. Vegetius states that such *itineraria* were quite common, although he writes in the fourth century AD. A commander

²⁸ Benea 1999, 144.

²⁹ C. C. Petolescu, *Dacia și Imperiul Roman. De la Burebista până la sfârșitul antichității*, București 2000, 19-21.

³⁰ See all these aspects at E. Nemeth, *Granița de sud-vest a Daciei romane. Probleme actuale*, in *Studii de istorie antică. Omagiu profesorului Ioan Glodariu*, Cluj-Napoca 2001, 411-418; Idem, *Die neuen Ausgrabungen im römischen Kastell von Vărădia-"Pustă"*, paper presented at the 19th Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, Pecs, Hungary, September 2003.

must have the *itineraria* written out (*perscripta*), so that he might get not only (*not solum*) the usual information on distances “but also about the condition of the roads (*sed etiam viarum qualitate*)”, so that, having had them “accurately described (*ad finem descripta*), he might take into account shortcuts, branch-roads (*deverticula*), hills, and rivers. So much so, that more ingenious commanders are claimed (*firmentur*) to have had itineraries of the areas in which their attention was required not so much annotated (*non tantum adnotata*) but even illustrated (*sed etiam picta*), so that the road for setting out on might be chosen not only by a mental consideration (*non solum consilio mentis*) but truly at a glance of the eyes (*verum aspectu oculorum*)”³¹.

An official itinerary was the “Antonine” one, ordered by Caracalla. Unfortunately, the part dealing with Dacia was lost. It is reasonable to assume that, just like for Dobrudja, the Dacian segment of *Itinerarium Antonini* was the main source for Tabula Peutingeriana.

We can not suggest a precise date for this map, but some conclusions are still possible. We think that the redactor/redactors of TP used regional *itineraria* from different provinces of the Roman Empire when they compiled the document. It is possible that the regional *itinerarium* that reflects the roads from Dacia can be dated in the period Trajan-Hadrian. Our arguments are:

1. the presence of the locality *Azizis* on the road Lederata-Tibiscum. This locality was important only in Trajanic context, because the road mentioned above is the one used by the Emperor in the campaigns from Dacia;
2. the road Lederata-Tibiscum is mentioned on TP, but it is possible that it was abandoned after the reign of Hadrian;
3. no vignette was drawn at Potaissa, which indicates that here, in the period Trajan-Hadrian, although the main road from Dacia was constructed³², there was not a *mansio* of great importance in use.

³¹ B. Salway, op. cit., 31.

³² CIL III 1627.

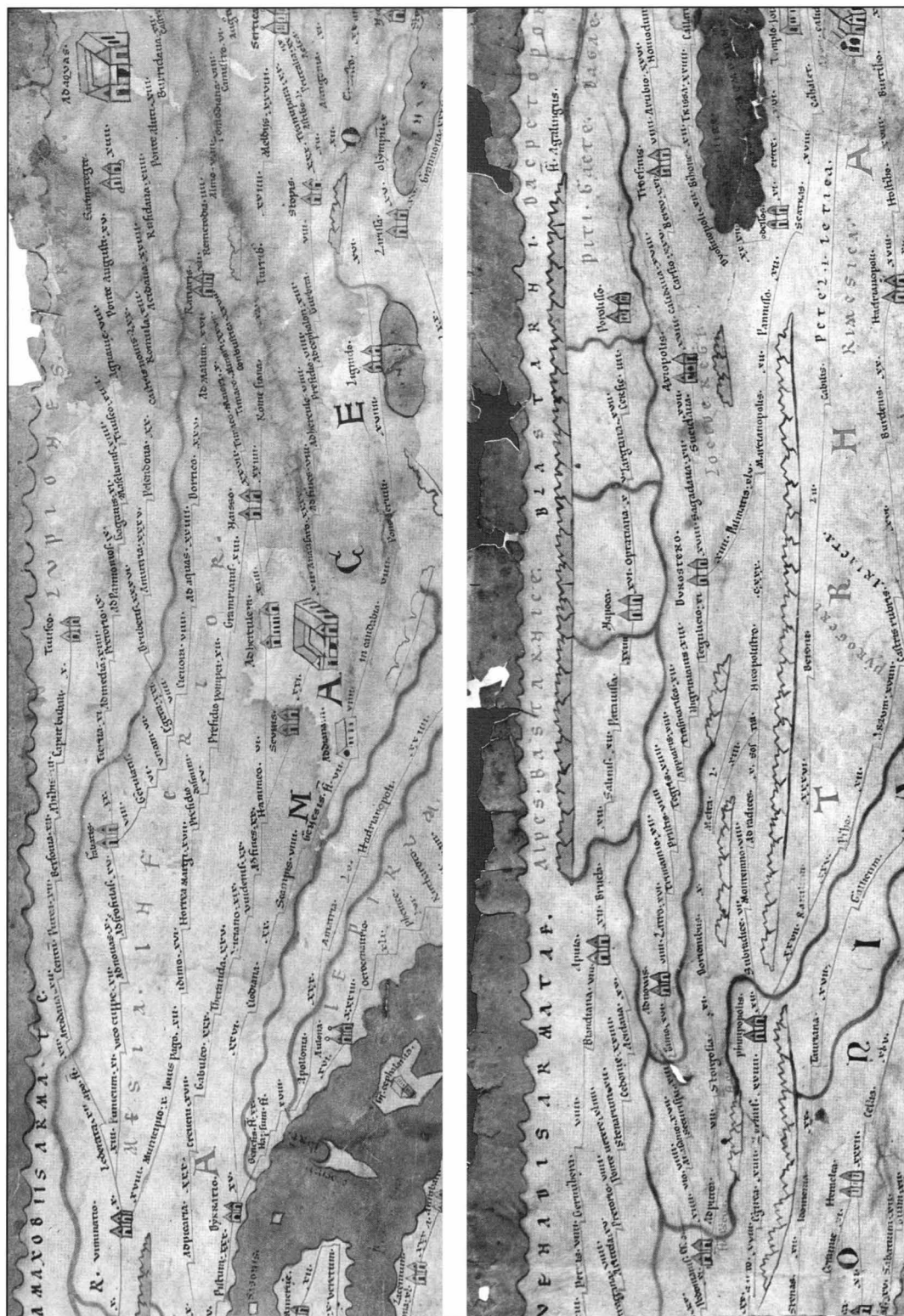


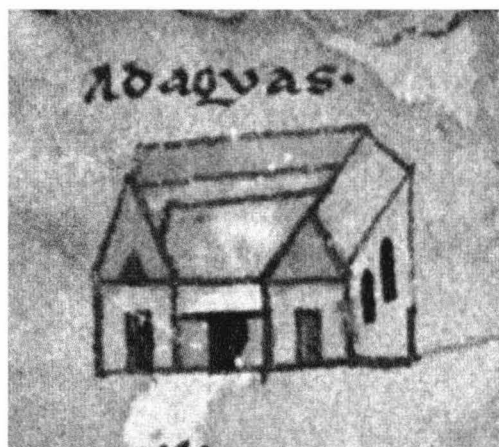
Fig. 1. Dacia on the Peutinger Table (after Istoria Românilor, II, București, 2001, 194).



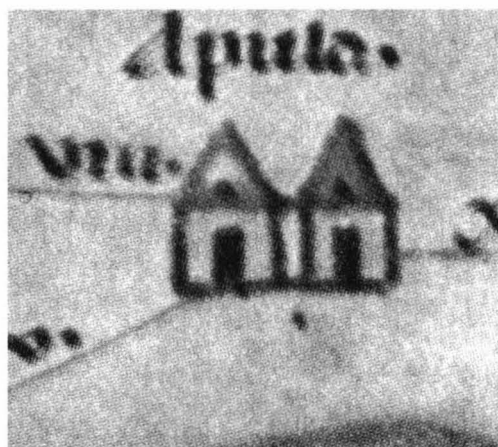
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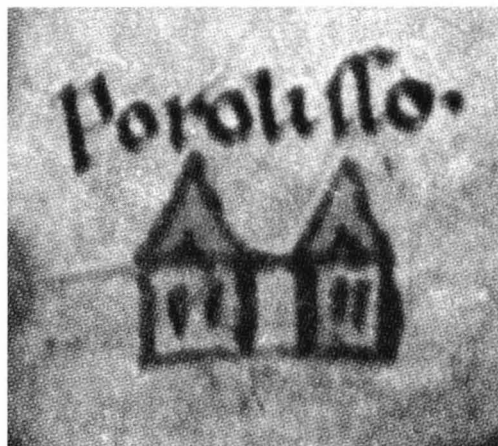
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Fig. 2. Cities from Dacia represented with vignettes. 1.) Tibiscum. 2.) Sarmizegetusa. 3.) Ad Aquas. 4.) Apulum. 5.) Napoca. 6.) Porolissum.