

DACIA IN THE TABULA PEUTINGERIANA

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In the course of this lecture it is not necessary to give a detailed description of the Tabula Peutingeriana, nor is it possible to deal with all the toponyms and streets and stations of Dacia which are preserved for us in this remarkable and unique document. This could better be done – and has been done – by local scholars¹. For my part, I want to concentrate on a confined problem, which is, however, central to our understanding of the map: how does the presence of Dacia, north and east of the Danube respectively, fit into the general assumption that the map, that means the ancient original of the Tabula Peutingeriana, has to be dated into Late Antiquity.

Allow a few preliminary remarks concerning this question. When the Tabula Peutingeriana was first presented to a learned public in the 16th century, there was no doubt that this medieval copy, let us say of the early 13th century, must have been of ancient origin. From the first detailed study, written by Markus Welser, who prepared the *editio princeps* in 1598, up to Franz Christoph Scheyb, who made the first modern edition of the Tabula in 1753 by copying it, putting oiled paper over it and tracing all the lines and letters directly from the unique Viennese copy², the ancient original has been dated to the time of the emperor Theodosius (let us say: to the end of the 4th century). Even prince Eugene, when he made up his mind to buy the Tabula, speaks of the “Tabula Peutingeriana de Theodose”³. I shall come back to this point later.

Modern scholarship, however, disagreed with this interpretation. Konrad Miller, whom I should mention because of his world-wide-used edition of the Tabula, dated the ancient original to the years 365/366. He based this date on the idea that the three personifications of Rome, Constantinople and Antioch were actually Roman emperors, and found out that in 365/366 Valentinian was – or rather could have been – emperor in Rome, Valens in Antioch and the usurper Procope in Constantinople⁴. So he assumed this as the date of the drawing of the original map. Obviously this interpretation is nonsense – apart from all, these figures are no Roman emperors, but symbols, the personifications of the respective cities –, but Konrad Miller was not an ancient historian, he was an autodidact (and catholic priest), and the more the experts of his days assailed him, the more he persisted on this point. One of his critics was Theodor

¹ E.g. Fodorean 2013.

² Hardly anyone knows, that this copy made by Scheyb was used even by Konrad Miller, when at the end of 19th century he made his wide spread edition which all researchers used since then, until in our days the facsimile- and online-editions appeared.

³ Weber 1976, fig. 7; Talbert 2010, plate 6 (reprinted from Weber's edition). The second but identical letter *au Camp de Semlin, le 20 de Sept 1717*, that is preserved as well, mentioned by Weber 2007, p. 376 sq.

⁴ Miller 1916 p. xxx sq.

Mommsen, whose criticism, as one easily understands, was not always gentle. Nevertheless, you will find this dating in most scholarly publications and encyclopedias, without the editors rendering account how Miller could have come to this result. In 1983, Luciano Bosio found a new argument for dating the ancient original to the early 360s, based on the assumed depiction of the famous Apollo-temple in the grove of Daphne near Antioch on the Tabula. This temple was struck by lightning on October 22nd, 362 and completely burned down⁵. This is not, however, a decisive argument, as there are other anachronistic items in the Tabula. Moreover, as I pointed out some years ago⁶, this building surrounded by trees is most likely not a pagan temple, but a Christian church (St. Michael or the church of the martyr Babylas, the patron of Antiochia). Compare this drawing with the similar buildings depicted on the map in the immediate neighborhood of Rome (St. Peter) and Constantinople (St. Irene of Pera/Galata).

In 2010, Richard Talbert proposed a dating of about 300, during Diocletian's tetrarchy⁷, but that is likewise impossible. With such a date for the original composition all features of late antiquity – and particularly Constantinople founded in 330, with its “burnt pillar” (and probably the statue of Arcadius at its top) – and all the Christian structures, admittedly scarce, but nevertheless existent, should have been added later. But it's a matter of logic that the latest date of composition of a map cannot be earlier than the most recent data content.

Some years ago two Italian scholars, Annalina and Mario Levi, proposed dating of the map to the first half of the 5th century. They pointed out, amongst other good arguments, that in the western part of the Roman Empire *Ravenna* (4B1⁸) could only be depicted with the significant distinction of the “city-walls” after 408, when it became imperial residence. Neither Milan nor Treves / Trier have a similar distinction. Aquileia, on the other hand, which is represented on the map by a similar mark (3A5), was ruined by Attila's Huns in 452⁹. Additionally, a dating between 408 and 452 is supported, for instance, by the mosaics of Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome, where we have striking parallels to the circuit “city-walls”, and the pictorial symbol of the rectangular “temple”-building (or church, as we have seen) as well. These mosaics, at least of the triumphal arch in Sta. Maria Maggiore, as the inscription reads, were commissioned by pope Sixtus III, i.e. 432–440¹⁰.

An Irish monk called Dicuil, who lived in France in Carolingian times, cites an ancient poem that the emperor Theodosius ordered two servants to revise an ancient world-map, which they did in a few months¹¹:

Hoc opus egregium, quo mundi summa tenetur

...

Theodosius princeps uenerando iussit ab ore

Confici, ter quinis aperit cum fascibus annum.

Supplices hoc famuli – dum scribit pingit et alter –

⁵ Bosio 1983, p. 147–162.

⁶ Weber 2006, p. 775–781 (esp. 780).

⁷ Talbert 2010, p. 133–157.

⁸ These figures are given according to Talbert's new nomenclature, the first figure indicating the actual number of the sheet; the letters A, B and C refer to the upper, medium and lower part of it, and the last figures the common perpendicular division of each sheet into five sections. The Tabula is now easily accessible online: www.euratlas.net/cartogra/peutinger; <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/AL00161171> and <http://www.cambridge.org/us/talbert/index.html>.

⁹ Levi 1967, p. 134–150 (and the *Conclusioni*, p. 174).

¹⁰ Further arguments to this question are discussed by Weber 2012, p. 212–216.

¹¹ Dicuil, *De mensura orbis terrae* (825), ed. Parthey 1870, nr. 5, 4; *Anthologia Latina* II p. 175 nr. 724; Tierney 167, 56f.

Mensibus exiguis ueterum monimenta secuti

10 *In melius reparamus opus culpamque priorum*

Tollimus ac totum breuiter comprehendimus orbem.

So we have an exact dating, when this order was given: *ter quinis aperit cum fascibus annum* – “when he opened the year with fifteen *fascēs*”. But a Roman emperor did not have fifteen *fascēs* (or fifteen lictors carrying them), but generally, like any consul, only twelve. So this remark can only mean that the emperor held that year his fifteenth consulate. As Theodosius I was consul only three times, the emperor who ordered this revision of a world-map must have been his grandson Theodosius II, who had his fifteenth consulate in 435. So it all fits together: the remarkable symbol of the “city walls” of Ravenna and Aquileia from the first half of the 5th century, the mosaics of St. Maria Maggiore, dating between 432 and 440, and Dicuil’s mentioning of the remaking of a world-map in the fifteenth consulate year of Theodosius II. We must not doubt that this world map, revised in 435, was the “ancestor”, the ancient original of the Tabula Peutingeriana.

You might remember that the old scholars up to the 18th century believed Theodosius to have been the patron of the Tabula, and they did so because they knew the poem of Dicuil very well. But they misunderstood the line mentioning the dating, believing that the figure ‘fifteen’ referred to years of regency and not to those of consulships. They could not believe that Theodosius II could have ordered the remaking of the map, as in the 5th century the Roman Empire was divided and did not exist anymore in its shape, as depicted in the map. They did not give enough credit, however, to the strong urge of nostalgia in these days. The same emperor collected imperial constitutions of his predecessors in the *Codex Theodosianus* of 438, and the *Notitia dignitatum*, likewise reflecting a *Romanum imperium* of bygone days, is to be dated to the same period¹².

But what does the map depict about Dacia, a region that has been abandoned two hundred and fifty years earlier? It is hardly possible that in the 5th century even learned *famuli* would have been able to insert into the map the large region of the former province – rather small in the Tabula due to its longitudinal elongation, but reaching in length 85 cm, from 6A3 to 7A4. We should remember that the two *famuli* had not the task of creating a new map, they rather had to do some amendments to an existing copy¹³, and we can be quite sure that they, apart from that, did not delete features which are no longer up-to-date, but primarily added details they missed.

If we look back to information about older Roman maps, we may go back until the times of the emperor Augustus, when Agrippa prepared a suitable space in his portico near *via Flaminia* in Rome for his famous map. I cannot explain in detail why I am convinced, and I am not the only one, that the design of our Tabula goes back to this Agrippa-map – for one thing, its unusual shape would be rather easily explained by the fact that the original was fixed to the wall of a portico. Scholars like Pliny the Elder or the geographer Pomponius Mela, who evidently used the Agrippa-map, sometimes actually seem to describe features present in our Tabula Peutingeriana¹⁴. Of course, the Agrippa-map did not contain all the streets, street-stations and distances which are so characteristic for our Tabula Peutingeriana, as the Roman road-system was not yet developed. So we have to proceed to the period of the Severans, to the beginning of

¹² Remarkably enough, Ernest Desjardins, the eminent scholar of the 19th century, already noted: “Révision probable d'ensemble et addition de détails de l'époque de Théodose II comme en témoignent les vers cités par Dicuil”; Desjardins 1876–1893, 4, 80.

¹³ *In melius reparamus opus culpamque priorum tollimus* reads Dicuil’s poem (as you have seen, v. 10 sq.).

¹⁴ Weber 2005, p. 231–240.

the 3rd century, when the Roman road-system had almost reached its final stage. We may notice some further interest in geography or topography, especially in streets, in these days. The first pattern of the *Itinerarium Antonini* was, it seems, copied from a map, and at that time the Roman city-map came on display on a huge wall on Vespasian's forum. Milestones show that especially from the year 202 onwards the old Gaulish measure of the *leuga* (1 ½ Roman miles) was used in the Gallic provinces, and that is exactly what we find in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, too¹⁵. Hence we have from the 3rd century onwards a Roman map, whose design was based on the Agrippa-map, containing the Roman road-system – and of course Dacia as well. But when the revising *famuli* of the 5th century did their work, they evidently did not have proper information, so that our picture is, together with mistakes made by the medieval copyists, probably incomplete and sometimes difficult to explain.

Now let us have a short look at the Dacian part of the *Tabula*. We may start at *Viminacium* (Kostolac) at the Danube (6A2), and then proceed, as Traianus himself said, *inde Berzobim, deinde Aizizi*¹⁶, until we will finally reach *Tibiscum* (6A4), not far from Caransebeș, as you know (Fig. 1). Please note the “double-tower”, the most common symbol for larger structures on the *Tabula* – we will come across further examples soon. Here we have one of the typical errors in the *Tabula*, as the street ends here. We may well go on for *Sarmizegetusa* (*Sarmategte* = *colonia Ulpia Traiana*, 6A5), however this is noted, together with *Tibiscum* a second time, on another street coming from *Tierua* = *Dierna* (Orșova, 6A3/4), crossing the Danube downstream, as it seems, at the western entrance of Djerdap (Porțile de Fier) (Fig. 2). Hațeg or the correspondent ancient location is missing, together with the red line of the street, but we have the indication of a distance of 14 Roman miles (about 20 km). On the right hand corner of the sheet the remarkable feature of a larger symbol (6A5) can be found, often connected with *Aquae*, indicating a Roman bath. I, however, remind you, as we learned some fifty years ago, that the primary function of these symbols is not to indicate the importance of the relevant locations, but of the accommodations for travelers, as you will expect in any modern guidebook. Large estates in Pannonia (and elsewhere) had special structures only for housing official passengers with their entourage – here you have an archaeological reconstruction of the site at Szentkirályszabadja-Romkút near Lake Balaton (Veszprém) in Hungary (Fig. 3)¹⁷. The resemblance with the (even medieval) drawing on the *Tabula* and with the caravanserai in the East is immediately obvious.

Before we leave sheet 6, I should mention the third street, crossing the Danube at *Drobeta* (*Drubetis*, Turnu Severin, 6A4) with Apollodorus' famous bridge, which Hadrian had demolished and Constantine rebuilt. Both streets lead, as we will see immediately on sheet 7, to *Apulum* (Alba Iulia, 7A2) (Fig. 4). From here there are only few stations to *Potaissa* and *Napoca* (Cluj, 7A3) and finally to *Porolissum* (7A3). Between the Danube and the Black Sea there is the Dobruja (Dobrogea) with *Troesmis*, *Callatis*, *Tomis*¹⁸ and the river delta of the Danube (7A4–5) (Fig. 5).

So we have a remarkable picture of ancient Dacia in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, in spite of the fact that it is a depiction of bygone days. But we must not forget that Rome in its nostalgic ideology kept – and kept on keeping – the former province as its own, even if there were no

¹⁵ *Lugduno caput Galliarum – usque hic leugas* (1B5).

¹⁶ Bennet 1997, 20 and 90 with note 27, referring to Jordanes *Get.* 12, 74; Prisc. *Inst. gram.* 6, 13.

¹⁷ Thomas 1964, p. 118–122. This book contains a lot of further examples of similar archeological sites. It has to be noted that the editor (or the illustrator) wasn't aware of the parallels of these types in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*.

¹⁸ Note that it is called *Tomis* and not *Constantia*. Evidently the *Tabula* gives us at least in this part of Dacia an elder status, without actual corrections by the *famuli*.

Roman structures or administrative links any more. In this respect, the Tabula Peutingeriana is a documentation of imperial propaganda, too.

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DAKIEN IN DER TABULA PEUTINGERIANA (Zusammenfassung)

Seit die mittelalterliche Kopie einer antiken Weltkarte, die wir unter diesem Namen kennen, im 16. Jh. in der wissenschaftlichen Welt bekannt wurde, war es klar, dass sie in der überlieferten Form ein Produkt der Spätantike sein muss. Wie ist nun zu erklären, dass auf dieser Karte *Dacia* relativ umfang- und detailreich dargestellt ist (6A3 bis 7A4, entsprechend der Einteilung von Talbert), obwohl die Provinz nördlich der Donau unter dem Kaiser Aurelian (270–275) aufgegeben wurde.

Von Anfang an ist diese Karte mit dem römischen Kaiser Theodosius in Verbindung gebracht worden, denn in einem Gedicht, das ein irischer Mönch namens *Dicuil* in einem geografischen Handbuch aus dem 8/9. Jh. überliefert, ist davon die Rede, dass zwei *famuli* auf Anordnung eines Kaisers Theodosius eine Weltkarte überarbeitet hätten. Früher nahm man an, dass mit diesem Kaiser nur Theodosius I. (379–394) gemeint sein könnte, da nach ihm das Reich „geteilt“ wurde und nicht mehr in seiner alten Form bestand. Nun lässt sich aber zeigen, dass doch sein Enkel Theodosius II. (408–450) gemeint sein muss, da nur dieser einen fünfzehnten Konsulat bekleidet hat (435), auf den die datierende Zeile

in dem Gedicht hinweist: „*ter quinis aperit cum fascibus annum*“. Mit dieser Datierung stimmen auch historische und stilistische Erwägungen überein¹⁹. Daher ist die Tabula Peutingeriana, wie auch die etwa gleichzeitige *Notitia dignitatum*, das Produkt einer nostalgischen Erinnerung an eine Zeit, in der die römische Welt noch in Ordnung war. Und in diese Welt gehörte auch die Provinz *Dacia* in ihrer ursprünglichen Form.

¹⁹ Andere Datierungen, wie die von Miller (365/366) Bosio (vor 362) und Talbert (um 300) sollten demgegenüber außer Betracht bleiben.

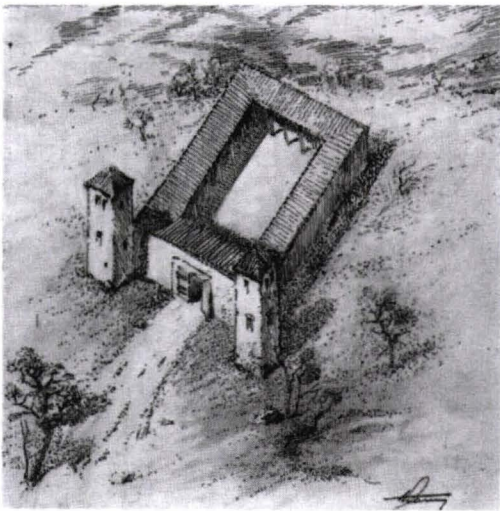


Fig. 3. Guest-house of the Roman Villa at Szentkirályszabadja-Romkút near Lake Balaton (Hungary); from Thomas, 1964, p. 121 fig. 58

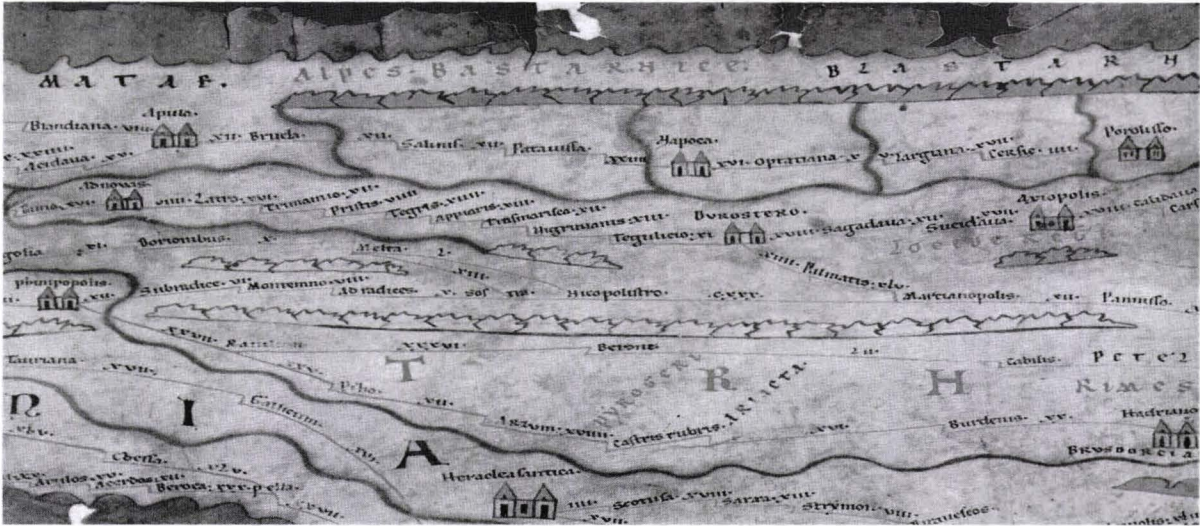


Fig. 4. Dacia, central and northern parts, *Tabula Peutingeriana* 7A2–7A3



Fig. 5. The Dobruja, *Tabula Peutingeriana* 7A4