

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION ROUTES – ROMAN TRAFFIC ON THE EASTERN PART OF THE DALMATIA PROVINCE TERRITORY

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ABSTRACT

*On the eastern part of the Roman province Dalmatia, traffic was very intensive during the Roman reign. Such a traffic intensity was mainly due to commercial, agricultural, and overall economic development and this territory's significance. Based on their titles, roads and transportation routes could be divided into state and private ones. According to the location and length, these could be further divided into urban, interurban, and rural, or, respectively, short-distance and long-distance roads and routes. According to the territories they occupied, roads and paths were split into overland and water ones, waterways, and terrestrial-water (buoyant) ways. It was the Army that built the first roads here in the 1st century. Some private roads leading from rustic villas to the nearby cities were built in the mid 2nd century and the 3rd century. Urban traffic was carried out based on the *cardo* and *decumanus* principles.*

Keywords: Traffic, Roads, Transport, Roman age, Dalmatia province.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological research carried out to date believes that the eastern part of the territory of the Roman province Dalmatia was inhabited by the population of the same ethnic and cultural identity in the period of Roman dominance. This territory includes the regions as follows:

- North : Bratunac region;
- West: Podrinje;
- East: Rogacica, and the western bank of the river Drina - Srebrenica, Skelani, Visegrad, Gorazde i Foca;
- Eastern bank of the river Drina: Kosjeric, Uzice, Pozega, Priboj and Nova Varos;
- South: Prijepolje and Pljevlja (Wilkes, 1969).

First roads in these regions were built by the Army, immediately upon the Dalmatian province's foundation in the early 1st century. The Dalmatian province later acquired so-called *in armis* status, i.e., it became a military-free zone. Beneficiary camps, posts, and temporary military posts located by the rivers Drina, Cehotina, and Djetina and dated in the 2nd and 3rd centuries were the sole exceptions to the *in armis* rule. The period from the second to the third century was featured by a great significance

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of trade, economy, and agriculture in this area. This paper presents archaeological research conducted to date and the research results referring to the traffic carried out on the eastern part of the Roman province of Dalmatia.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION DURING THE PERIOD OF ROMAN EMPIRE

Roman province of Dalmatia was founded in the 9th century B.C. Upon the foundation of any province, including this one, Roman's main goal was to establish political and administrative centers and build roads. Roman Empire was a military-political force with offensive activities and unique systems of establishing power. Therefore the two facts mentioned above were essential. It is known that more than 550 Roman miles of roads were built over the period from the year 14 to 20 B.C. Some of these roads were undoubtedly located on the territory of the eastern Roman province of Dalmatia. At first, these were military roads (*via militares*) that evolved into public roads (*via public*). These *via militares* were initially used by the Army for transit and the army post foundation purposes. Further, the Army used the roads to establish administrative-political points that would later turn into cities of municipal ranking. The establishment of administrative-political points was of great significance for the Roman Empire, as the Empire was a military-political force whose relations to provinces were strictly based on the tax collection and their supply to Rome. The Army had a crucial role in collecting taxes and levies in the subject region as well, for the romanized population had not had any clearly defined governance by that time. At the time, the area was generally featured by breaking up the clan community and converting the clan aristocracy into a romanized population. The Army kept the same role even after the romanized population had been incorporated into governance systems mediated with the existence of military posts.

Another critical issue connecting economy and commerce, on the one hand, and the Army on the other, was Dalmatia's strategic location, including its eastern part. Being a strategic point, this region was connected to Donia Panonia and, in particular, Sirmium and Mesia Superior, and thus further to the Danube and the Black Sea. The area was the crossroad between western provinces and the Orient.

ECONOMY AND TRAFFIC

The first roads built by the Army over the first century A.D. were classified into so-called state roads. All these roads could also be classified into state-owned and private ones, according to their respective title. The State paid and bore the costs to have the roads built, and these works were initially performed by the Army (Zotović, 2002). It may be assumed that these roads extended over the routes connecting the main strategic points located in the eastern region of the province of Dalmatia with the headquarters in the city of Rome. The courses of the leading east Dalmatia's strategic directions are not known. But we know that Romans had already had strategic plans for the future development of urban centers, i.e., *municipium*. In this way, the regions of today's city of Uzice, the village of Visibaba near Pozega, Prijepolje and Pljevlja - located eastern from the Drina river – and Domavija and Rogatica from the Drina's western bank, were indeed connected via road posts with Salona (contemporary Solin near the city of Split) and further via Aquileia with Rome. The route Salona (the capital of Dalmatia) – Aquileia – Rome is well known from the geographical maps containing the respectively drawn references. Upon the foundation of the municipality ranked

cities and those that would later acquire the colonial status, temporary military posts, and city councils (*ordo decurionum*) became the competent authorities for the state road-building activities. During the second and third centuries, road building and repair works were authorized by the State, which was interested in the industrial and agricultural exploitation of this region. The main interest of the Roman Empire was the same in any territory under its reign, so it was here. It was tax collection, together with a series of levies and charges imposed on the turnover of goods and services. The fact that the Army built the first roads shows how the Roman State was based on the strict "Army – politics – taxes" relations. For the first state road-building purposes, Rome's political moves referred to the central zone of industrial exploitation – mining, wood, and stone industry.

The mining centers known to have existed on the territory of the eastern Dalmatia province were located around contemporary Srebrenica and Roman Domavia and the modern town of Prijepolje. This area might have been a Roman Municipium S. Roman Domavia represented a center of the *Argentaria* mining district. It was undoubtedly connected with the Sirmium Colony (Sremska Mitrovica city today) and further with Salona, Aquileia, and Rome. As a colony, Sirmium was entitled to forge its monetary emissions; therefore, it must have been connected with Domavia and, perhaps, Municipium S to transport the ore supplies used for money forging. Indeed, these two mining centers were associated with the beneficiary and temporary military posts on the eastern part of the Roman province of Dalmatia, i.e., on the rivers of Drina, Cehotina, and Djetinja. This connection must have been primarily achieved to access metallurgical workshops located near military posts. These workshops were used to have tools and weapons manufactured or repaired, as required by the Army. Such transportation was made over the state roads, thus considered so-called short-distance transit. This transit was not very economical; therefore, the above items started being transported together with ceramics and food necessary for military units (Greene, 1990).

In addition to this kind of exploitation, timber was exploited via waterways. The main channel in this area was the Drina River and other short-distance transit waterways, such as Uvac, Cehotina, and Djetinja. The land and water route included the track Salona – Krka – Cetina – Neretva – Foca - Komini – Kolovrat. This route was used for transportation of goods and the transfer of cultural impact (Zotović, 1995, 189). This impact is reflected in the style and iconography seen on gravestones located in and around Komini and Kolovrat. The modern territory of western Serbia was connected to today's city of Budva and the valley of the Neretva River through land roads and waterways (Zotović, 1984). Findings show transportation from the *Galia* province and the eastern part of the Roman province of Dalmatia conducted in the late 3rd and during the 4th centuries. This finding is based on the movable glass material manufactured in *Galia* and imported in the eastern part of the Roman province of Dalmatia (Kuzmanović, 1971 & 1992). The exact route of the road(s) is not known. But, a part of the course certainly included the province of *Pannonia*, i.e., Sirmium.

From the mid 2nd century into the 3rd century, *vilae rusticae* were mainly developed at locations more or less distant from municipal centers. These rustics and municipal centers were connected on a so-called short-transit basis. These roads connecting the rustic villas with municipal centers were classified into private roads. They were built by the owners of *vilae rusticae* to secure undisturbed and tax-free transit of the goods to the nearby cities and back. Though these villas were primary agricultural properties, they often included workshops, such as ceramic or

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metallurgical ones. Ceramic workshops were maintained in rustic villas, for they manufactured the products with the highest pay-off rate on the market. Also, *Expositio totius Mundi et Gentium* provides data that the entire Dalmatian province was famous for its dairy product exports, particularly the favorite Dalmatian cheese. Both private and state-owned roads were paved, while the rural ones were earthen and beaten.

Urban traffic – either pedestrian or transport – was conducted on the *cardo* and *decumanus* basis. *Cardo* and *decumanus* were the two main streets mutually intersected at a right angle. It was there that these two streets dispersed into side streets built to form urban districts. Main pedestrian and transport traffic routes were oriented towards the Forum and the market.

CULTURAL IMPACTS AND PULSES ARISING FROM TRAFFIC

Cultural impacts and pulses and traffic routes they followed are known based on the archaeological material processed to date. Such material includes Roman gravestones and votive monuments (Zotović, 2016).

As indicated above, cultural pulses beating in the southern part of the eastern Roman province of Dalmatia streamed over the route Salona – Krka – Cetina – Neretva – Foca – Komini – Kolovrat. Simultaneously, another course started in the south of the province to continue through Macedonia on the way to Greece. The first series of Roman gravestones located in Komin and Kolovrat indicates Aquileia and Salona's impact, while local engravers took over subsequent works on the Roman monuments. Stone was an expensive raw material; therefore, it is believed to have been supplied from local stone pits over private or rural roads. The same impact referred to the northern part of the eastern Roman province of Dalmatia. It included the route starting from the province of Donja Panonia and, particularly, Sirmium.

The immigrant population coming from the seaside of the Dalmatia province brought many customs to make an additional cultural impact on the subject territory. We now know that the migration referred to groups of families. Still, it is not clear whether they used land roads or waterways following the Neretva River's valley to arrive in Foca, Komin, or Kolovrat. There were two migrations in the second half of the first century and the second part of the third century. That's when the respective cultural impacts, pulses, and imports spread significantly.

It is also believed that Pirusts, the coal miners, moved from Alba Iulia to the areas around Komin and Kolovrat. They brought there their own - rather "poor" - cultural impacts and pulses.

CONCLUSION

Based on the to-date archaeological results, it may be concluded that the territory of the eastern part of the Roman province of Dalmatia had a dense road network in the middle of the 2nd century. It further extended into the 3rd and 4th centuries. According to their locations, these roads were rural, urban, or interurban. According to the length, these roads were classified into short-transit and long-transit ones. According to their type, they were either waterways or land ways. The first roads were built as early as at the beginning of the first century. Upon the foundation of the Dalmatia province, the roads were made by the Army. These roads were state-owned. According to their title, they were also classified into

state-owned and private ones. Private roads were built by the owners of the rustic villas to transport their goods to cities. Such goods primarily included agricultural and ceramic products. The main waterway was the Drina River, which was used for the transportation of timber. Shorter channels were Uvac, Cehotina, and Djetina. Another land-water transit was carried out over the route Salona – Krka – Cetina – Neretva – Komini – Kolovrat, or Budva – the Neretva River valley – Prijepolje. These routes were used for transportation of goods, but also a transfer of cultural influences. Urban traffic – either pedestrian or transport – was conducted on the *cardo* and *decumanus* pattern. It included two streets mutually intersected at the right angle and individually dispersed into several side streets to form urban districts. The main pedestrian and transport traffic routes led to the Forum and the market.

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