

UDC 930.85(4-12)

YU ISSN 0350-7653

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

BALCANICA XXXVII

ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

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BELGRADE
2007



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Pre-Roman and Roman Dardania Historical and Geographical Considerations

The Balkan Peninsula, in the south-east of continental Europe, with its abundant forests and mountains, and, accordingly, with remote and hard-to-reach places, for a long time was believed to be a barely accessible region. However, the region is criss-crossed with valleys, such as those of the Morava, Vardar, Nišava, Timok, Ibar, Toplica and Drim rivers, opening up obvious directions of northward communication. The rivers, as if following a rule, cut narrow gorges in the rocks, connecting spacious and fertile basins. On the rims of the basins, mountain ranges often rich in ores offer a good raw material base for the development of metallurgy as well as impetus for trade. Hospitable fertile zones and other natural resources of the Balkans have attracted human communities from the earliest times. The Dardani, a pre-Roman people, had occupied the central areas of the Balkans¹ from prehistoric times.² The focus here being on the antique period of Dardania, the ethnogenesis of the Dardani will not be dealt with. *Terminus post quem*

¹ The central part of the Balkan Peninsula, with the basin of Niš (Roman Naissus) in its midst, is criss-crossed with natural communications the courses of which follow some geological constants both longitudinally and transversally. The most important longitudinal courses have been the valleys of the Morava and the Marica rivers, on the one side, and those of the Morava and the Vardar, on the other. The main transversal communication was between Scutari, the basin of Kosovo and Metohija and the Morava, as the most convenient natural connection between the interior and the Adriatic coast. A series of depressions, separated by low barriers between the mentioned three areas of this important route, together with the valley of the Drim river, made a clear line of communication. With all the advantages of the configuration taken into account, it becomes obvious that the transportation of goods and persons have followed the courses outlined above from early prehistoric times, antiquity and the Middle Ages to modern times. On natural communications in the central Balkans, see Cvijić 1966, 15-19.

² For the area of proto-Dardanian and pre-Dardanian material culture, see Tasić 2003, 40-51.

for this paper will be the time when Greek authors first took interest in the Dardani, an already formed people established in a territory they were to inhabit throughout antiquity. I believe it important at this point to suggest that this paper should be seen as an attempt to shed some light, from several perspectives, on the complex issue of the Dardani and their society in antiquity, and on their integration into the territorial and social framework of the Roman Empire. Historical developments prior to Dardania's inclusion into the Roman Empire will be looked at, as well as the question of identifying the boundaries and character of the Dardanian areas within the Roman administrative organization. Special attention will be paid to the ways in which the establishment of Roman rule affected the development of Dardanian society, economy, settlement and communications. Methodologically, the approach to the subject will be based on different classes of material, from the available literary sources and epigraphic evidence to some valuable results of archaeological research.

The earliest reference to the Dardani can be found in Justin,³ listing the tribes forced by Philip II to recognize the supreme power of the Macedonians, as suggested by Fanula Papazoglu.⁴ During the wars of the Diadochi, at the time Lysimachus created his empire, from 284 to 281 B.C., the Dardani seem to have evaded Macedonian rule, and very soon they became a constant threat on the northern borders of Macedonia. More important references to the Dardani in the sources date from the times of the great Celtic invasion, 279 B.C., when the Dardanian land was overrun by numerous Celtic tribes on their campaigns aimed at looting the treasures of Greek temples. The Roman historian Livy gives the following account of these events:⁵ *A large and mighty crowd of the Gauls, goaded on by the poverty of their land or the desire to plunder, thinking that none of the peoples whose territories they had to pass could rival their power in arms, led by Brennus, came to Dardania.* The Dardanian king, whose name, unfortunately, was not recorded, offered the Macedonian king Ptolemy Keraunos his 20,000 soldiers to counteract the invading Celts. Keraunos declined disdainfully the offer of his barbarian enemy, somewhat underestimating the strength of the Celtic warriors, and he himself died fighting them. It is a well-known fact that the Celts were eventually stopped and defeated only at Delphi. Withdrawing towards the north, they passed through Dardania, where, as the sources record, they were completely destroyed. Justin recounts these events in the

³ Just. VIII 6, 2.

⁴ On the political history of the Dardani, see Papazoglu 1969, 104-143.

⁵ Liv. XXXVIII 16.

following passage:⁶ *The peoples and the tribes ... squabbled about them, when they would find them wandering about the fields, worn out by hunger, cold and exertion, as if they were spoils, while another classical writer expressly states: ... and when passing through the Dardani land, they were all destroyed, so that there was no one left to go back home.*⁷ This, however, is a serious exaggeration, since we know that smaller groups of Celts settled around the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers under the name Scordisci.⁸

There are no further references to the Dardani until the 230s B.C. Then there ensued their constant wars with the Macedonians. With the arrival of the Romans in the territory of Illyricum in 200 B.C., the Dardani took the side of the Republic and significantly strengthened their positions against Macedonia by occupying the area of Paeonia. However, after the defeat of Perseus in 168 B.C., and especially from 148 B.C., when Macedonia ceased to be independent and fell under Roman rule, the Dardani, left without constant raids against their southern neighbour, now entered into confrontation with Rome. The Roman occupation and annexation of Dardania was not carried out in a short time – it was a process unfolding through several war conflicts and, I would say, with certain reluctance. Namely, the first contacts of the Dardani with the Roman army are thought to have taken place in the early first century B.C., but it was not until Scribonius Curio's campaign against the Dardani, *bellum Dardanicum*, from 75 to 73 B.C., that Dardania experienced the might of the Roman conquering force. At the head of a huge army of about 30,000 troops, Curio seized the whole of Dardania, thus becoming the first Roman military leader to reach the banks of the Danube.⁹ Curio was extraordinarily cruel in crushing the resistance of the most powerful people in the inland Balkans, but this victory did not immediately result in the annexation of Dardania to the Roman state. There are no reliable data as to when this actually occurred. Caesar's data are also worthy of note, informing us that in 48 B.C. Pompey recruited the Dardani and Bessi to his cavalry, both by force and through friendly relations.¹⁰ However, it cannot be clearly understood from this report what the status was of the Dardani cavalymen used by Pompey. It seems quite certain that the Dardani had the obligation of providing troops

⁶ Iust. XXXIV 8, 13–16.

⁷ Diodor, XXII 8.

⁸ Papazoglu, 1969, 110.

⁹ Fest. *Brev. c. 7: Dardanos et Moesicos Curio proconsul subegit et primus Romanorum ducum ad Danuvium usque pervenit.* In F. Papazoglu (1969, 179 ff) all the important sources on this campaign are quoted and translated into Serbian.

¹⁰ Caes. *Bell. civ. III, 4, 6: Dardanos, Bessos partim mercenarios, partim imperio aut gratia comparatos.*

for the Romans, but they are also likely to have been Pompey's mercenaries or allies during the civil war.

Little is known of Mark Antony's campaigning against the Dardani, but the fact that such a campaign was launched at all leads to the assumption that not all of Dardania was conquered and defeated. The wars Marcus Crassus waged in the Triballian lands and in Moesia in 29–28 B.C. involved the Dardani.¹¹ Speaking of the causes of Marcus Crassus' campaign against the Dacians and Bastarni in 29 B.C., Cassius Dio says: *Bastarni, having then crossed the Ister, conquered Moesia which was opposite their land, and then also the Triballi who were her neighbours, and the Dardani living in their (Triballian) land. And all the time they did that, they had nothing to do with the Romans, but when they crossed Mount Haemus...* (present-day Stara Planina or the Balkan Mountains).¹² This remark about the Dardani living in the Triballian land may refer only to the area of the Južna (South) Morava and Nišava rivers, which then means that this territory was not of immediate interest to the Romans until Crassus' campaign. There are no reports in the wake of this campaign either on the Dardani, or on the Romans fighting them. It seems quite probable that the Dardani actually lost independence in 28 B.C. Thus, the final occupation of Dardania by Rome has been connected with the beginnings of Augustus' rule, while its administrative inclusion into the Empire to form the province of Moesia appears to have taken place in 15 B.C.¹³ As a result of the division of Moesia under Domitian, the Dardanian territory became part of the newly-established province of Upper Moesia or *Moesia Superior*.

However, it is virtually unknown when Roman legions were transferred from Macedonia to Dardania.¹⁴ It may be assumed that no permanent garrisons had been stationed in Dardania prior to 16 B.C., the year the last Scordisci attack against Macedonia met with no organized resistance in

¹¹ Marcus Crassus' campaign was provoked by the Bastarnian attack. Cassius Dio (Cass. Dio LI 23, 2 ff) reports that the Bastarni crossed the Danube and occupied Moesia, the Triballi and the *Dardani living in the Triballian territory*, until their defeat by the Romans. It was not until they attacked a Roman ally, the Dentheleti, that the Romans decided on military intervention. According to Fanula Papazoglu (1969, 142–143), the area around the Južna Morava and the lower course of the river Nišava should be considered as the Triballian land inhabited by the Dardani.

¹² Cass. Dio LI 23, 2.

¹³ Mirković 1968, 22.

¹⁴ Some authors suggest that the legions stationed in the north of Macedonia at the beginning of the Principate were under the command of one legatus *Augusti pro praetore*, cf. Patsch, *Beiträge* V, 1, 86; Mirković 1968, 23 ff; Syme 1971, 60, n. 72.

Dardania.¹⁵ The movement of legions may have followed the crushing of a Thracian revolt in 11 B.C., and it certainly took place before a Dalmatian–Pannonian uprising in A.D. 6–9, at the outbreak of which Caecina Severus came to the aid of the Romans besieged in *Sirmium*.¹⁶ As to the location of the first Roman military camps in the province of Moesia, of legions *III Scythica* and *V Macedonica*, opinions diverge.¹⁷ It is quite reasonable to assume that such camps must have been at strategically important points, such as *Naissus*¹⁸ or *Scupi*,¹⁹ from where the conquered peoples, Dardani, Moesi and Scordisci, could be controlled. However, the first military inscriptions from the territory of Moesia Superior, if we disregard the earliest ones from the *Limes*, date from the mature Flavian age and mostly come from the sites connecting *Naissus* with the Danubian basin (*Timacum Minus*,²⁰ *Aquae/Prahovo*,²¹ *Taliata*²²).

The province of Moesia Superior, which included, as already mentioned, the area of Dardania, existed for a relatively short time, from A.D. 86 to 272, and had a specific history and specific military and administrative structure.²³ Namely, the circumstances in Moesia Superior depended to a large extent on its ethnic diversity, its geographic position along the main road connecting Italy with the East, and also on its diverse terrain and unusual shape (it stretched from the Danube far to the south), but mostly on its rich and varied mineral resources.

According to the notes of the Roman second-century legislator Saturninus, Upper Moesia was thought to be a land rich in ores,²⁴ in much the same way as *Africa proconsularis* was called the granary.²⁵ According

¹⁵ Cass. Dio LIV, 20, 3.

¹⁶ Cass. Dio LV, 29, 3.

¹⁷ For the transfer and accommodation of the first Roman legions in the territory of Dardania, and for the oldest military inscriptions, see Petrović 1979, 30–31 (with the earlier bibliography). As regards the stay of legion *III Scythica* in Moesia (Dardania) and its transfer to Germania, see Dušanić 1978b, 470 ff.

¹⁸ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 89; Petrović 1979, 37–51.

¹⁹ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 112; Dragojević-Josifovska 1982, 20–40.

²⁰ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 125; Petrović 1995, 37–50.

²¹ TIR, L-34, Aquincum 94.

²² TIR, L-34, Aquincum 109; Vučković-Todorović 1969, 125–134; Popović 1982, 265–282.

²³ Dušanić 2000, 343.

²⁴ Dušanić 2003, 255, n. 44.

²⁵ Dig. 48.19.16. 9–10 (Saturninus): *evenit, ut eadem scelera in quibusdam provinciis gravius plectantur, ut in Africa messium incensores, in Mysia (!) vitium, ubi metalla sunt,*

to Slobodan Dušanić,²⁶ apart from military (legionary) and municipal territories and private estates, Upper Moesia was divided into four major units named after the local tribes: the Dardani (Dardania) in the entire south of the province,²⁷ and the areas of Tricornienses (Tricornenses), Pincenses (Pincenses) and Moesi in the north.²⁸ Each of the four subdivisions combined two types of territories: those rich in ores belonged to the imperial treasury, *fiscus*, and the rest to tribal settlements, *civitates peregrinae*. The fact that the *civitates peregrinae* and fiscal estates (or at least the mines) bore the same names is explained by the fiscal domains being named after the tribal communities from which they had been seized. On the other hand, those who belonged to *civitates peregrinae* doubtlessly had the obligation of labour on the estates, especially in the mines. The unity of peregrine and fiscal organizations was ensured by military administration. It is of interest to point to the role of the army in servicing the *res metallica*, which basically was dual. It primarily protected the mines, but it also took part in ore processing and was involved in administration. The mines needed protection due to an increasing threat not only to the ore pits but also to the roads used for transporting precious loads, especially after A.D. 250. Military presence in the territory of Dardania, such as cohorts I *Aurelia Dardanorum* (based at *Naissus*) and II *Aurelia Dardanorum*,²⁹ as local militias, was necessary because of the danger of raiders – *latrones Dardaniae*, robbing caravans and merchants, and raiding estates in the vicinity of fortified stations.³⁰ Information on *latrones* can be found in the biography of Marcus Aurelius.³¹

In this paper Dardania will not be looked at as a Late Roman province, a result of Aurelianus' reforms. The Dardania to which this paper refers is the area that constituted a composite fiscal domain (analogous to an agricultural *tractus* divided into *regiones*) within the province of Upper Moesia. In Moesia Superior, the division of fiscal domains which included

adulteratoris monetae. For more detail about Saturninus' notes, especially concerning coin minting in mining districts, cf. Dušanić 1995, 135-136.

²⁶ Dušanić 2000, 344.

²⁷ According to Pliny and Ptolemy, Dardania occupied the entire south of the province of Upper Moesia, Plin. *Nat.* III 149, Ptol. III, 9, 2; III, 9, 4.

²⁸ On the division of Moesia Superior into four major entities, see Dušanić 2000, 344. According to Dušanić 2003, 256, the territory of Moesia Superior was divided into two large zones: *Dardania* in the south, and the area named *Ripa Danuvii* in the north of the province.

²⁹ On two cohorts *Aureliae Dardanorum*, see Dušanić 1978a, 237-247; Petrović 1979, 29-33.

³⁰ On *latrones Dardaniae*, see Mócsy 1968.

³¹ SHA, *vita Marci*, 21, 7: *latrones etiam Dalmatiae atque Dardaniae milites fecit*.

mines was identical to the organization of the military, *portoria* and *civitates peregrinae* in the second and early third centuries, until the major upheavals that shook the Empire between 250 and 300.³² A mining area (*tractus*), such as Dardania, was governed by a procurator, the *procurator metallorum*. Generally, the imperial mines in Dardania all belonged to the *fiscus*, and thus were governed indirectly by the *comes metallorum per Illyricum*, who in turn were under the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, judging by the information from the *Notitia Dignitatum*.³³

Administration of fiscal territories such as Dardania required a certain form of centralization, which also involved *portorium*.³⁴ Thus Dardania may well have constituted an administrative entity, but not a separate province under the Principate. Special type of administrative centre was at *Ulpiana*,³⁵ and the area of Dardania consisted of several centres united into a few areas, *civitates Dardanae*.³⁶ There were at least five subdivisions, in close connection with the economic interests of the *fiscus*, and above all with the mines constituting the *Metalli Dardanici* complex. Their centres were: 1) Sočanica (Municipium Dardanorum);³⁷ 2) Ulpiana; 3) in the vicinity of the village

³² Dušanić 1980, 25-26.

³³ Not. Dig. Or. XIII 11.

³⁴ Dušanić 1977a, 70, n. 97.

³⁵ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 129; Čerškov 1969, Parović-Pešikan 1982; Fidanovski 1998, 258-349. *Res publica Ulp(iana)* appears as the dedicant of inscriptions on three monuments found in the area of Remesiana, cf. Petrović 1979, 101-103, n. 69, 70, 71. It is generally thought that this was the town of *Ulpiana* in present-day Kosovo (Mommson, *CIL*, III, 368; Patsch 1898, 287 ff; Vulić 1961, 29). It is a fact that *Ulpiana* set up these monuments in *Remesiana* with the approval from the provincial governor, which is explained in the scholarly literature in various ways. Mommson believed that the monuments had been simply transferred from *Ulpiana* to *Remesiana*. The large distance between the two places makes such an assumption unacceptable. Starting from these inscriptions, Patsch concluded that the *concilium* of the province could have been held in *Remesiana* and that these monuments had been set up at the time of the conference of the towns of *Moesia Superior*. N. Vulić believed that the presence of these dedications in *Remesiana* could be explained by the town's border position, and he linked their erection with the passing through of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. The envoys of Upper Moesian towns, *Ulpiana* included, arrived in *Remesiana* to greet the Emperors when they entered the province. S. Dušanić proposes an interesting and acceptable thesis pointing to the fact that *Ulpiana* and *Remesiana* were mining centres and that they most probably were administrative and territorial communities of the same fiscal domain. Such an explanation sheds light on the reasons for *res publica Ulpiana* to set up an official inscription in *Remesiana* with the provincial governor's approval (Dušanić 1977a, 91; 1977b, 172; 2000, 345, n. 19).

³⁶ Dušanić 2000, 345, n. 18.

³⁷ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 89; Čerškov 1965, Čerškov 1969.

of Lopate (Lamud(um)?),³⁸ Konjuh (Vizi(anum)?),³⁹ or Kratovo (Kratiskara?);⁴⁰ 4) Bela Palanka (Remesiana);⁴¹ and 5) Ravna (Timacum Minus?).⁴² With regard to that, judging by the geological constants and the available data on *vici metallorum*, on several toponyms *Ad Fines*, or customs stations dependent on the mining territory, the Dardanian mines may be classified into the following districts: I. Ibar (Sočanica); II. Janjevo (Ulpiana); III. Kumanovo (Lopate);⁴³ IV. Bela Palanka (Remesiana); V. Ravna (Timacum Minus?). The administrative position of district VI, which is probably the area: *east Kopaonik–Kuršumlija*⁴⁴–*Veliki Jastrebac–Lece*,⁴⁵ remains rather unclear.⁴⁶

The extent of Upper Moesian Dardania is for the most part known, and it coincided with the southern parts of the province of Moesia Superior. Therefore, according to Fanula Papazoglu,⁴⁷ it was an area with its western boundaries west of the present-day line Djakovica–Peć–Novi-Pazar–Ivanjica–Čačak, and probably identical to the border of the Roman province.⁴⁸ In the southwest of Dardania was the tri-border of the provinces Moesia,

³⁸ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 80.

³⁹ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 72-73.

⁴⁰ It is uncertain whether the areas of Kratovo and Zletovo should be assigned to Dardania or to the province of Upper Moesia. According to Dušanić 1980, 27, n. 135, Kratovo mining region formed part of Thrace rather than Dardania, but the other hypothesis cannot be completely ignored, cf. Patsch 1937, 1, 227; Keramičiev 1973, 147-154. The inscriptions from Kratovo–Zletovo region (Keramičiev, 1966) were mostly in the Latin language, Dragojević-Josifovska 1982, 41, n. 6. From the area of Kratovo originates a female statue made of volcanic rock, presumably Libera. On the classification of the find and on the connection of the cult of Libera with mineral resources, see Pilipović 2005.

⁴¹ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 108; Petrović 1979, 51-57; Petrović 2004b, 277-284.

⁴² Dušanić 2003, 257, 258.

⁴³ In the place of Lopate there was a temple dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus, whose religious function may be viewed in the context of the mining pantheon, cf. Dragojević-Josifovska 1982, n. 208. On the connection of Dolichenus' cult with mining, see Dušanić 1999, 134; Petrović 2004a, 217-224.

⁴⁴ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 77.

⁴⁵ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 78.

⁴⁶ Dušanić 2003, 259.

⁴⁷ On the boundaries of Dardania within Upper Moesia, see Papazoglu 1969, 143-161.

⁴⁸ According to epigraphic testimonies (Vulić 1931, no. 321 *VII Claudia*, no. 325 *IV Flavia*: from the place Dobrušta or Dobrudža) and geomorphology, the border between Upper Moesian Dardania and Dalmatia in the territory of present-day Metohija was identical to the natural and modern border of Serbia on one side, and Albania and Montenegro on the other, cf. Papazoglu 1969, 150.

Dalmatia and Macedonia, which seems to have been identical to the pre-Roman Macedonian–Dardani–Illyrian tri-border. According to Ptolemy,⁴⁹ this tri-border was Mount *Scardus*, identified as the present-day mountain range of Šar with Korab and other highlands connected to it in the direction of Debar⁵⁰ and Kičevo. The southern Dardanian borders seem to have followed the border between the Roman provinces of Moesia Superior and Macedonia, which was also the border between Greek- and Latin-speaking areas. They were, thus, the areas between Mount Šar and further on, along the border of Moesia Superior, to Bylazora,⁵¹ an ancient town to the north of present-day Veles. The eastern borders of Dardania should be looked for east of the line Kumanovo–Vranje–Bela Palanka, that is in the vicinity of antique *Remesiana*, on the river Nišava, the limit of the Latin-speaking zone in Roman times. The Dardani, unlike their pre-Roman neighbours, preserved autochthonous traditions and remained non-Hellenized. With the Roman conquest, they adopted the Latin language.⁵² The northern borders of Dardania are very difficult to identify but it is believed, based on the view of Fanula Papazoglu, that it was the area encompassed by the river Zapadna (West) Morava and the limits of the antique *Naissus* area, east of the river Velika Morava. As a contribution to this issue we should also mention Ptolemy's information on *Naissus* as one of the four towns of Dardania.⁵³ In identifying the area of *Naissus* in Dardania the epigraphic evidence is also important, notably the text *Naisso Dardaniae*⁵⁴ from the Early Empire period, found in Rome, which supports Ptolemy's testimony. As for the limits of the *Naissus* area in the north, it is also important that Marcus Aurelius, at the time of the wars with the Marcomanni, established cohort *II Aurelia Dardanorum*, based in *Naissus*. According to the epigraphic evidence, this cohort also stayed in forts *Praesidium Pompei*⁵⁵ (near Aleksinac) and *Timacum Minus* (Ravna), near the river Timok.

That the territory of Dardania could have extended even further north of the Zapadna Morava and antique *Naissus* is indicated by several

⁴⁹ Ptol. II, 16, 1; III 9, 1.

⁵⁰ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 40.

⁵¹ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 32.

⁵² The eastern border of Dardania most probably lay after the station *mutatio Latina* (TIR, K-34, Naissus, 77-78), on the Roman road *Viminacium–Naissus–Serdica–Constantinopolis* (Itinerarium Hierosolymitanum 565.1-566.8), the first station east of *Remesiana*. *Mutatio Latina* was the last place where, at least according to toponymy, Latin was in use, unlike the Greek-speaking regions further east, cf. Petrović 2005, 67.

⁵³ Ptol. III 9, 4.

⁵⁴ *CIL* VI, 32937.

⁵⁵ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 103; Petrović 1976 and 1979, 25.

interesting facts. Namely, as is known, Pliny states that the rivers *Margus* (Morava), *Timachus* (Timok) and gold-bearing *Pingus* (Pek) flow from Dardania.⁵⁶ Furthermore, an epigraphic piece of information, which according to the interpretation by Slobodan Dušanić refers to *Dea Dardania*, originates from a place farther to the north, Kamenica between Kragujevac and Gornji Milanovac.⁵⁷

In parallel with the establishment of their rule in the newly-conquered territories, the Romans devoted themselves to incorporating these areas, through careful and cautious planning, into the economic system of the Empire. The Dardanian society of the time had several strata: the landed aristocracy, independent or semi-dependent farmers and cattle-breeders, miners, traders and craftsmen. Settlements that may be interpreted as urban were very rare, and functioned as the seats of the local aristocracy, traders and craftsmen. They were built on hilltops and enclosed with earthen walls, so in times of war they served also as safe havens or *refugia* for the inhabitants of nearby villages.⁵⁸ The surviving toponymy of Roman Dardania testifies to the antiquity of the settlements in Dardanian areas. In addition to verified Greek and Latin toponyms, the names of the largest number of settlements draw their roots from the pre-Roman inhabitants of Dardania. As we move from the east towards the west, the widespread toponymy of Thracian origin is gradually replaced by the toponymy of Dardanian and Illyrian origin in the far west. Some names, such as those of the towns *Naisus* and *Scupi*, preserved their Celtic roots.⁵⁹ Based on this brief onomastic observation, the existence of many settlements may be assumed even prior to the Roman conquest.

Gradual Romanization, involving the planned settlement of Roman citizens, resulted in the formation of urban centres with limited self-government in certain areas of Dardania. After the Roman conquest, due to military, economic and administrative reasons, the original pre-Roman *refugia*

⁵⁶ Plin. *Nat.* III, 149: *Flumina clara e Dardanis Margus, Pingus, Timachus*; Papazoglu 1969, 203.

⁵⁷ Mirković and Dušanić 1976, n. 167. However, even if this inscription was dedicated to Dardania, it does not necessarily mean that Kamenica near Kragujevac was in Dardania. Dardanian settlers in *Apulum* in Dacia dedicated two reliefs to the same goddess, personification of Dardania, cf. *CIL* III, 995, 7853.

⁵⁸ They were Iron Age defensive hillfort settlements. Built on hilltops, they provided control of the surrounding area. For the archaeologically attested remains of pre-Roman Dardanian settlements and fortifications, such as the hillforts at Belačevac, Gornje Gadimlje, Hisar, Kuline, Samodreža (Teneš Do) in the west of Roman Dardania, see Tasić, 1998, 147-225.

⁵⁹ Papazoglu 1969, 189-201.

and *vici* grew into urban centres of larger areas, such as *Scupi* and *Naissus*. The inhabitants of towns were more exposed to the process of Romanization than the rural population, as a rule more conservative and reluctant to adopt a new culture. The newly-formed urban centres were sources from which Roman influence and culture spread among the local population; moreover, they were also the military, economic, administrative and religious centres of entire regions.

The reasons for an early Romanization of the Dardanian areas lie above all in the Roman Empire's increasing needs for ores containing silver, gold, zinc, copper and lead, necessary for maintaining the empire's monetary stability. Therefore, the areas rich in ores, such as the slopes of Stara Planina, Svrljig and Kopaonik, were organized into mining regions and imperial domains. Then the centres like *Municipium Dardanorum* at the confluence of the Sočanička and Ibar rivers, and *Ulpiana* in the vicinity of Gračanica, appeared. The rise of settlements was caused by the presence of other natural resources as well, such as the fertile valleys of the Nišava and Morava rivers (*Margus*), or the wealth of thermal springs suitable to become spa centres (Niška Banja, Mediana,⁶⁰ Kuršumlijska Banja⁶¹). However, the largest number of settlements was established along the roads, both main and local.

The roads recorded in Roman itineraries⁶² (Viminacium–Naissus–Serdica–Constantinopolis; Naissus–Ratiaria; Naissus–Lissus; Naissus–Scupi) were built very early, perhaps as early as the first decades of the first century A.D. However, it is quite probable that the Roman roads followed the course of earlier, pre-Roman, roads, and that in that sense the Roman conquest of the Dardani areas brought no discontinuity.⁶³ Early consolidation of the road network in Roman times is explained by their great strategic importance. The oldest Roman roads connected *Stobi*⁶⁴ with *Scupi* in the south of Dardania, and then with the Morava river valley and northwards to the Danube, where the army was transferred. Innumerable legions travelled

⁶⁰ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 84, 85; Petrović 1994.

⁶¹ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 77.

⁶² The term *itinerarium* is derived from the Latin word *iter* (route) and denotes a route map with descriptions of Roman communication lines. Itineraries indicated settlements (stations) and the intervening distances. For the territory of Roman Dardania the following itineraries are of importance: *Itinerarium Hierosolymitanum*, 565.1–566.8; *Itinerarium Antonini*, 134–135.4; *Tabula Peutingeriana*, segm. VI and *Ravennatis anonyimi cosmographia* (Anonymi Ravennatis) IV, 7.

⁶³ Pre-Roman Dardania maintained intense contacts with the Greek colonies on the Adriatic coast (Apollonia, Dyrrhachium) along the Drim river valley, and in the east, with Macedonia, along the Vardar and Strumica river valleys, cf. Tasić 1998, 214.

⁶⁴ TIR, K-34, Naissus, 119–120.

these roads at the time the Romans were consolidating their rule in the central Balkans, and at the time they were firming up the Empire's borders on the Danube. The great antiquity of Dardanian roads is also supported by the absence from the itineraries of some important towns, such as *Municipium Dardanorum*⁶⁵ and *Ulpiana* in west Dardania. It is obvious that these towns, being primarily economic centres, grew after the main communication lines had been constructed. Namely, upon Dardania's incorporation into the Empire, there followed a fast development of various economic activities, above all the intense exploitation of mineral raw materials. In the vicinity of the already known or newly-established mining areas new urban centres were built, so that the communications lines constructed in the early first century and during the second and third centuries gained great economic significance, though originally intended for military purposes. Since certain regions rich in natural resources were often far away from the originally built communication lines, very soon an entire network of local roads developed for the purpose of transporting ores and other raw materials.

Although the Romans regularly maintained the roads, it seems quite reasonable to assume that in particular heavy loads were transported in other, cheaper ways. In addition to land modes of transport we should take into account here also the possibility of fluvial transportation, or, more probably, a combination of road and river transport. For highly practical reasons transportation by waterways would have been used whenever possible, especially since it is known that in antiquity, due to a more humid climate and dense forests, many rivers, even smaller ones, were navigable. According to Strabo, the river Drim was navigable from its mouth upstream to Dardania,⁶⁶ and the river Nišava was also navigable in one section, according to the inscription of a recruit of the river *classis* of legion *VII Claudia* from *Naisus*.⁶⁷ Goods could easily have been transported by waterways to the nearest sea ports, where they would be reloaded to larger vessels to be distributed to distant parts of the Empire. This can be supported by the find of a set of lead ingots from *Caesarea* in modern Israel.⁶⁸ Namely, during the archaeological investigation in 1993 of the vestiges of a Roman merchant ship, which obviously had sunk just off the port, lead ingots were discovered, two of which still bore clearly visible stamped inscriptions. One inscription refers to Emperor Domitian with the name *Ger(manicus)*, which clearly suggests a

⁶⁵ Fidanovski 1998, 258-349.

⁶⁶ Strab. VII, 5, 7.

⁶⁷ A soldier of legion *VII Claudia* served as *Disce(n)s epibeta* in the river *classis*, according to the inscription from the fortress of Niš, cf. Petrović 1979, 31.

⁶⁸ S. Dušanić, *Dardanian Lead Ingots at Caesarea Palestinae*, forthcoming.

date between A.D. 83, when Domitian gained that name owing to his military victories in Germania, and A.D. 93, the last year of his reign. The other stamped inscription, of interest to our issue, reads: *Met(alli) Dard(anici)*, indicating the Dardanian origin of the precious shipment.

Unfortunately, the traces of Roman roads in the area of Dardania are ill-preserved in our times. The reason for that lies in the fact that they were for the most part overlaid by later, medieval and modern roads, and also that the very configuration of the terrain has been unfavourable for the preservation of visible traces.⁶⁹ Such a poor state of preservation should also be attributed to continuous devastation by local populations, given that similar fate also befell other structures of Roman date in towns and villages.

* * *

It seems important to reiterate the key ideas stemming from our considerations of this complex theme, attempting to outline some important moments in the history of pre-Roman Dardania, as well as to show all the complexity, specific position and particular structure of Roman Dardania under the provincial organization of the Empire. By shedding light on the issue of delineating the extent of Roman Dardania within the province of Upper Moesia and pointing to certain epigraphic data and written sources, it has been shown that Dardania's boundaries may be moved further north of the river Zapadna Morava, the area of antique *Naissus* and *Timacum Minus*. When the Romans appeared on the historical stage of Dardania, they did not interfere much into the stratified and stable social structure and hierarchy of the newly-conquered areas.⁷⁰ Attracted by the mineral resources of Dardania and seeking to expand the borders of the Empire to the Danube, the Romans first constructed main roads, recorded by the itineraries, in continuity with the courses of pre-Roman communications. However, the fact that, in contrast with *Scupi* and *Naissus*, some important towns, such as *Ulpiana* and *Municipium Dardanorum*, do not occur in the itineraries, suggests the antiquity of Dardanian settlements and communications. By simple deduction, the following phases in the development of Dardanian settlements and communication lines may be outlined: **I. Pre-Roman phase** – characterized by *vici* and rare urban settlements in the form of *refugia*, as seats of the local aristocracy, trade and crafts. The road network was determined by the natural features of the terrain and the human need for movement and trade. These communication lines were travelled by armies, but they also carried influences of more advanced Greek and Macedonian

⁶⁹ Čerškov 1969, 43-49.

⁷⁰ Fidanovski 1998, 288.

cultures; **II. Early Roman phase** – marked by the rise of the first urban centres of larger areas. Communication lines mostly followed the well-proven courses of pre-Roman roads, and such roads were used mostly by armies and logistic support to the troops on the *Limes* (first century A.D.); and **III. Developed Roman phase** – from as early as the second and third centuries A.D., when the development of settlements was significantly influenced by the exploitation of mineral and other resources of Dardania. The main roads in Dardania assumed a predominantly commercial and economic character. Due to abundant mineral resources and intensive exploitation of the imperial mines, the roads carried rich loads of metals towards other parts of the state. Such loads attracted robbers, *latrones*, making military presence in the stations along the roads necessary, even after the “firm” border of the *Limes* was established.

In these last considerations it is also important to bring attention to the point that, regardless of the well-organized protection and maintenance of the road network, it is hardly imaginable that heavy loads (ores) could have been transported solely by land. It appears logical to assume, especially in the light of the facts mentioned, that waterways were partly used for transporting goods towards the nearest Adriatic and Aegean seaports. Hopefully the assumption proposed here will find further scholarly corroboration in the times to come.

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UDC 911.6:94](36/37Dardania)

Abbreviations

Sources

Iust.	<i>Iuniani Iustini Epitoma historiarum Philippicarum</i>
Diodor.	<i>Diodorus Siculus</i>
Fest.	<i>Festi breviarium rerum gestarum populi Romani</i>
Caes.	<i>Bell. civ. C. Iuli Caesaris Commentariorum de bello civili</i>
Cass. Dio	<i>Cassi Dionis Historiae Romanae epitome</i>
Not. Dig.	<i>Notitia Dignitatum</i>
Plin. <i>Nat.</i>	<i>Naturalis historia</i>
Ptol. <i>Geogr.</i>	<i>Ptolemaei geographia</i>
Strab.	<i>Strabonis geographia</i>
Liv.	<i>Titi Livi ab urbe condita</i>

Literature

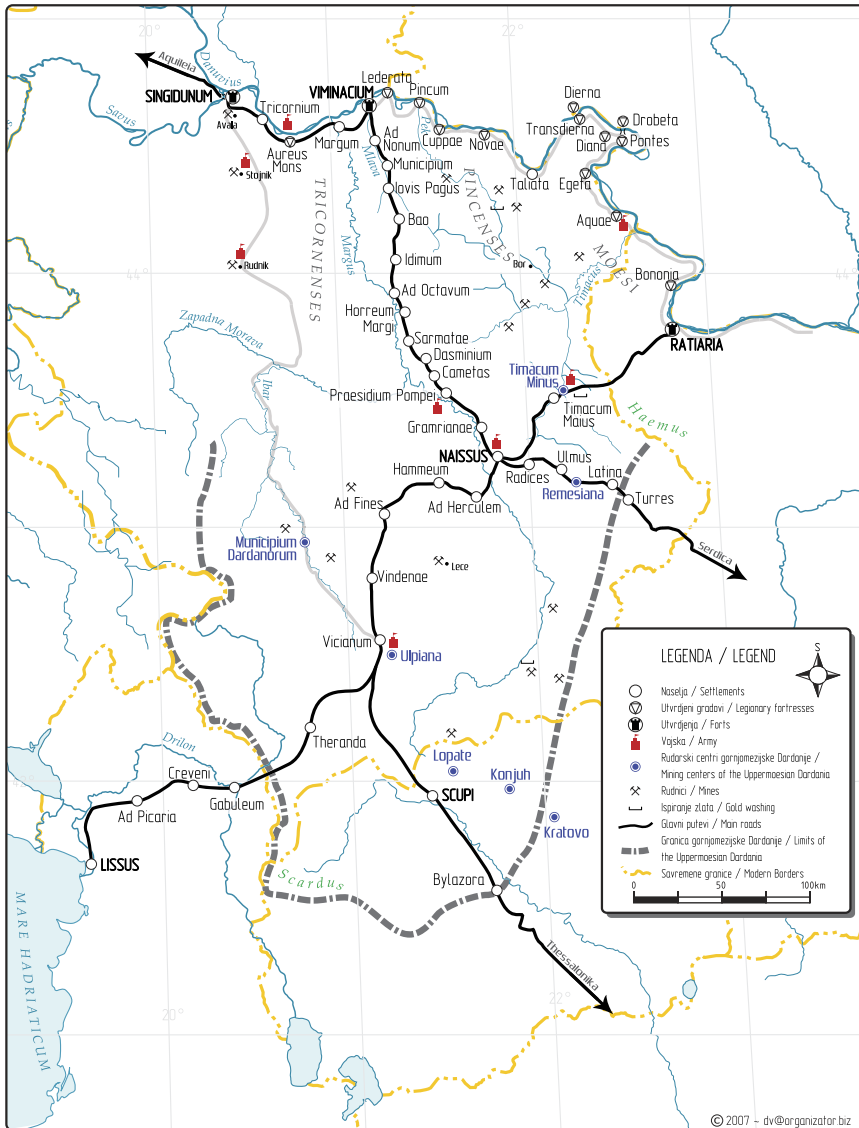
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> , Berlin–New York
CIL	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
Patsch, <i>Beiträge</i>	C. Patsch, <i>Beiträge zur Völkerkunde von Südosteuropa, V, 1: Aus 500 Jahres vorrömischer und römischer Geschichte Südosteuropas bis zur Festsetzung der Römer in Transdanuvien</i> . Vienna 1932

SHA	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
TIR, K-34, Naissus	<i>Tabula Imperii Romani, Naissus–Dyrrachion–Scupi–Serdica–Thessalonice</i> . Ljubljana 1968
TIR, L-34, Aquincum	<i>Tabula Imperii Romani, Aquincum–Sarmizegetusa–Sirmium</i> . Budapest 1968
ŽA	<i>Živa antika</i> . Skopje

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Map of Upper Moesian Dardania