

TRAJAN'S BRIDGE AT DROBETA-TURNU SEVERIN BUILT BY THE ARCHITECT APOLLODORUS*

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Abstract: In 1998, the Ministry of Culture commissioned the Design Centre for the National Cultural Heritage (CPPCN) with the project entitled *“Restoration and enhancement of the ruins of Trajan's Bridge in Drobeta Turnu-Severin”*. Within the project, 12 potential variants were drawn up, of which the optimal one for that moment was chosen. The project was abandoned in 2003, due to the dissolution of the Design Centre for the National Cultural Heritage. With all those actions, taken with good intentions, the Ruin of Trajan's Bridge didn't gain much: a published volume containing the complex and multi-disciplinary research, official visits, a perimeteric drain channel and a pump to evacuate meteoric water from the basin in which the ruin is embedded. The railway (which is a single track rail and an important international railway) noisily crosses the ancient enclosure even today, although there have been opportune moments to move it. From time to time it is damaged and becomes impracticable because of the landslides downstream from Turnu-Severin, but, with all those impediments it remains immovable. The people that were morally involved in the project included the archaeologist Prof. Dr. Petre Alexandrescu and the architect Aurel Teodorescu.

Rezumat: În 1998, Ministerul Culturii încredința Centrului de Proiectare Pentru Patrimoniul Cultural Național, proiectul de *„Restaurare și punere în valoare a ruinelor Podului lui Traian de la Drobeta-Turnu Severin”*. În cadrul proiectului s-au redactat 12 variante posibile din care s-a ales cea optimă pentru acel moment. Proiectul a fost abandonat în 2003, odată cu desființarea Centrului de Proiectare Pentru Patrimoniul Cultural Național. Din toate aceste demersuri, realizate cu bună intenție, Ruina Podului lui Traian nu s-a ales cu mare lucru: un volum cuprinzând cercetarea complexă și multidisciplinară, vizite alese, un dren perimetral și o pompă de evacuare a apelor meteorice pentru apa din bazinul în care ruina este încastrată. Călea ferată (o unică linie dus-întors, importantă linie internațională) traversează zgomotos și azi incinta antică, deși au existat momente oportune de mutare a ei. Din când în când se avariază și este de nefolosit din cauza alunecărilor de teren din aval de Turnu Severin și cu toate aceste impedimente rămâne de neclintit. Printre cei implicați moral în proiect au fost profesor dr. arheolog Petre Alexandrescu și arhitectul Aurel Teodorescu.

The history of the integration of the Ruins of Trajan's Bridge and of the Roman camp of Drobeta in the modern urban structure of the town of Turnu Severin.¹

After the 1828-1829 Russo-Turkish War and the Peace Treaty of Edirne (1829), navigation on the Danube is delivered from Ottoman authority and benefits from an unprecedented development. On the former estate of Severin,² in 1833, the Russian General Pavel Kiseleff approves the regulating plan of the new town of Severin, which was drawn up by the engineer Moritz von Ott. The entire authority of Walachia's prince Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica and of his brother Mihalache Ghica was needed for the new town plan to be implemented to the west of the Roman camp, with special insistence on protecting the piers of Trajan's bridge.

* The present contribution is based on the paper *Zece ani de la proiectul „Podul lui Traian de la Drobeta-Turnu Severin”* [Ten years from the project *“Trajan's Bridge at Drobeta-Turnu Severin”*] given at the Symposium *“Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology”* in April 2010 (ARA/11).

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¹ The 1998 Symposium of the Regional Museum of Porțile de Fier (Iron Gates) gave hope that the integration and enhancement of the ruins would succeed. After 5 years during which research was conducted and documentations were drawn up within the Design Centre for the National Cultural Heritage (CPPCN), with funding from the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs (MCC), there still was hope in succeeding to integrate the ruins of Trajan's bridge in the tourist and urban circuit. During the following Symposium of the Regional Museum of Porțile de Fier, in 2003, the same obstacles that determine the resuming of the project were discussed.

² P. Trăiloiu, N. Marian, *Geneza orașului modern Severin*, <http://www.informatiadeseverin.ro/ids/reportaj/geneza-ora-ului-modern-severin.html> (retrieved January 2011). Turnu-Severin appears as a settlement “On the grounds of the April 22, 1833 decree, and also of the order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on April 27, 1833. On May 19, 1833 most of the estate of Severin (90 hectares), i.e. its part belonging to the nobles, was bought from the nobles Ion Severineanu and Bălașa Fratoșițeanu, in exchange for the sum of 90,000 lei, which was paid by Walachia's Treasury, and entrusted to the Magistrate of the Town of Cerneți.”