

MILESTONES INDICATING DISTANCES FROM *MOESIA INFERIOR*

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Summary: Milestones are special pillars typically inscribed with information which helped travelers during ancient times to move from one place to another. Initially, they contained only little geographic information. In time they become instruments of communication and propaganda, the text of inscriptions is becoming more elaborate including all the titles and genealogy of the emperor who built or repaired the road or other kind of data.

Among the information provided to travelers was the distance measured in *milia passuum* (1 MP = 1480m) from one place to the nearest locality. Although important it is not always specified. Sometimes neither the distance! In Lower Moesia were so far discovered 31 such *milliaria*. They are the subject of the present contribution. Most of them were identified *in situ* confirming distances recorded on ancient itineraries or had contributed to the reconstruction of the course of the ancient roads within the province.

Rezumat: Stâlpii miliari reprezintă bornele kilometrice ale antichității. Inițial inscripțiile de pe aceștia menționau doar câteva informații cu caracter geografic care să-i ajute pe călători să se orienteze în spațiu. Cu timpul însă au devenit instrumente ale comunicării și propagandei, textul inscripției cuprinzând întreaga titulatură a împăratului care a construit sau reparat drumul sau alt tip de date. Între informațiile furnizate călătorilor se afla și distanța măsurată în *millia passuum* (1 MP = 1480m) până la cea mai apropiată localitate. Nu întotdeauna numele acesteia este menționat. Câteodata nici distanța nu apare în inscripție! În provincia *Moesia Inferior* s-au descoperit până în prezent 31 de astfel de miliari. Aceștia reprezintă subiectul contribuției de față. Cei mai mulți dintre ei au fost identificați *in situ* confirmând astfel distanțele înregistrate pe itinerariile antice sau au contribuit la reconstituirea traseelor drumurilor antice de pe teritoriul provinciei.

One of the most important information given by the inscriptions on the milestones was the distance. Among the 109 *milliaria* discovered in the province of *Moesia Inferior* 31 indicate the distance.¹

In *Tomis* were found four milestones indicating distances.² The most interesting of them³ mentions the locality *Tres Protomae*: ... *ab III Protomis / m(ilia) p(assuum) XXVII*. Where exactly (or even in what direction⁴) was *Tres Protomae* it is not known, over time have been advanced several hypotheses on its location: Weiss at Nicolae Bălcescu (former Danichioi);⁵ V. Pârvan,⁶ R. Vulpe,⁷ Al. Suceveanu⁸ and Em. Popescu⁹ at Mircea Vodă (Constanța County); I. Mititelu at Vadu;¹⁰ A. Aricescu at Corbu;¹¹ M. Bărbulescu at Medgidia or Valea Dacilor.¹²

Nicolae Bălcescu is approx. 40 km (27 MP) far from Constanța. The distance corresponds to the information on milestones but the discoveries made until now do not qualify it for the location here of *Tres Protomae* settlement.¹³

At Mircea Vodă (Constanța County) were identified early Roman traces¹⁴ and a late antique fortress.¹⁵ The latter is located on the highest part of the Celibihaci hill, in a strategically chosen place. From here one can keep under observation the Carasu Valley from close to the Danube up to Medgidia. Not far from here (at approx. 4.5 km) at Mircea Vodă railway station were reported Early Roman traces and a

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¹ Panaite 2011; Panaite 2012, pp. 67-80.

² ISM II 53(19); ISM II 112(78); Bărbulescu, Rădulescu 1980, pp. 140-157, no. 2; Bărbulescu, Rădulescu 1991, pp. 123-141.

³ ISM II 53(19).

⁴ Aricescu 1977, pp. 146-148; Aricescu 1975, pp. 325-326.

⁵ Weiss 1911, p. 69.

⁶ Pârvan 1912, p. 581.

⁷ Vulpe 1938, p. 166, note 1; Vulpe, Barnea 1968, p. 137.

⁸ Suceveanu 1977, p. 69 and fig. 1.

⁹ TIR L 35, p. 73.

¹⁰ Mititelu 1943, p. 88.

¹¹ Aricescu 1975, pp. 325-326; Aricescu 1977, pp. 146-148.

¹² Bărbulescu, Câteia 1997, p. 196.

¹³ According to M. Bărbulescu 2001, *passim* the so far discoveries do not sustain this hypothesis; in the area was researched a cremation cemetery, see Scorpan 1973, p. 144 and Irimia 1973, pp. 42-46; were also reported early tumuli and a Roman settlement.

¹⁴ Coșea, Popescu 1951, p. 170; Coșea 1957, pp. 325-326, no. 1; TIR L 35, p. 51.

¹⁵ Barnea, Ștefănescu 1971, pp. 64, 69, 103, 112; Barnea 1998, pp. 162-166.