

PROTECTIVE DEITIES OF ROMAN ROADS IN MOESIA INFERIOR

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Cuvinte cheie: *Moesia Inferior, Apollo Agyeus, Quadriviae, drum, zeități protectoare, altar, inscripție.*

Summary: *Roads were under the protection of the gods, especially Mercury and Mars but crossroads had their particular deities: Diviae, Triviae, Quadriviae (intersection of two, three or four roads) which were worshiped in specific sanctuaries named compita. Protective deities of Roman roads attested in Moesia Inferior are Apollo Agyeus and Quadriviae. Apollo Agyeus appears on two inscriptions found in Tomis and Callatis. Several altars dedicated to Quadriviae were discovered in Novae, Oescus and Tomis.*

Rezumat: *Drumurile erau sub protecția zeilor, mai ales Mercur și Marte. Intersecțiile de drumuri aveau zeitățile lor particulare: Diviae, Triviae, Quadriviae (intersecția a două, trei sau patru drumuri), care erau adorate în sanctuare specifice numite compita. Zeități protectoare ale drumurilor atestate în Moesia Inferior sunt Apollo Agyeus și Quadriviae. Apollo Agyeus apare pe două inscripții descoperite la Tomis și Callatis. Mai multe inscripții latinești de pe teritoriul provinciei atestă cultul pentru Quadriviae la Novae, Oescus și Tomis.*

Roman roads represent one of the most impressive feature of the Roman Empire. Construction, extension, and maintenance of roads networks correlate with the development of settlements are among the early achievements of Roman civilization.

Roads have ensured the unity and prosperity of the Roman Empire. Extremely pragmatic Romans personified everything, including roads. Those were under the protection of the gods, especially Mercury and Mars, but crossroads had their particular deities: *Diviae, Triviae, Quadriviae* (intersection of two, three or four roads) which were worshiped in specific sanctuaries named

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compita. Most often they were placed along the road¹, sometimes inside the stations (*mansiones*)². But there was not always a specific building: a passage in Apuleius³ speaks of how different were these places of worship: meadows, orchards, caves, trees or places to make small offerings of fruit or flower wreaths. In any form these rituals are always performed by the travelers, knowing that traveling was full of risks.

Protective deities of the roads attested in *Moesia Inferior* are *Apollo Agyeus* and *Quadriviae*. *Apollo Agyeus* appears on two inscriptions found in *Tomis*⁴ and *Callatis*⁵. The term *Agyeus*, which in translation means “protector of roads”, accompanies the name of the deity as epithet. The epigraph from *Tomis* (**Fig. 1**) consists of two texts on the same altar both carved and dated in the time of *Marcus Aurelius*: the first, more precisely between 166-172 AD, and the second one no earlier than 170 AD. They have been put in connection with extensive works for reconstruction of the coastline road. This important communication line will steadily be in the attention of imperial administration in the second half of the second century and beginning of the next one. Most milestones certifying its repairs are dated in the reigns of *Marcus Aurelius* and *Septimius Severus*⁶. This might be due to the presence of increasing number of military personnel in the cities on the shore, and on the other hand it can demonstrate the overall effort of strengthening the province, located in close proximity to the border.

Repairing works of the coastline road started in 162 AD and continued in the following. The inscriptions, based on a unique text, which came from the Governor *M. Servilius Fabianus Maximus*'s office⁷, have been proved this. Even though his name appears only on three of them, almost identical inscriptions prove that the road repair was made during his time.

The inscription from *Callatis* (**Fig. 2**) dates back to III-II centuries BC. In this case the inscription is not related to roads, *Apollo Agyeus* being only the eponymous deity for the year when inscription has been written. *Apollo Agyeus* was an important deity in *Megara*, and the eponymous deity in *Mesambria*⁸. He guarded the gates and ward off the evil and is therefore a deity with apotropaic qualities. It was sometimes represented as a column or painted pillar. His cult is rare; the attestations are very few while depictions on coins are a little broader⁹.

Several Latin inscriptions from the territory of the province show the cult of

¹ CHEVALLIER 1972, p. 79.

² e.g.: *Tres Tabernae Caesaris* – Zabern: CIL XIII 11647.

³ Florides I, 1: *Ut ferme religiosus viantium moris est, cum aliqui lucus aut aliqui locus sanctus in via oblatus est, votum postulare, pomum adponere, paulisper adsidere.*

⁴ ISM II 116.

⁵ ISM III 30.

⁶ *Marcus Aurelius*: *Callatis*: ISM III 196; ISM III 197; ISM III 198 (=ISM II 68(34)); *Histria*: ISM I 319; *Sinoe*: ISM I 322; 2 *Mai*: ISM III 199; 23 *August*: ISM III 195; *Septimius Severus*: *Tomis*: VULPE, BARNEA 1968, p. 192, footnote 56, unpublished inscription from 200 AD, information from A. Rădulescu from 1967; BĂRBULESCU-MUNTEANU, RĂDULESCU 1980, p. 140-157, no. 2; BĂRBULESCU, RĂDULESCU 1991, p. 123-141; *Odessos*: HOLLENSTEIN 1975, no. 23, 24; Săcele: CIL III 14461.

⁷ ȘTEFAN 1984, p. 95-107.

⁸ RUSCU 2009.

⁹ BALESTRAZZI 1981, p. 93-108.

Quadriviae. These come from *Novae*¹⁰ (Fig. 3.1 and 3.2), *Oescus*¹¹ (Fig. 3.3) and *Tomis*¹² (Fig. 4¹³). Inscriptions from *Novae* are widely dated between 100 and 250 AD, and the other two from *Oescus* and *Tomis* could not be dated. All four of them are shrines dedicated to deities *Quadriviae*.

The inscription which we present as being from *Tomis* was not included in any of the volumes (II-*Tomis* and III-*Callatis*) of the *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris* Collection. It may indeed come from *Tomis*, or perhaps from *Callatis*. It was published by Gr. Tocilescu in 1879, as belonging to the Collection Kogălniceanu and has not been republished ever since. The collection was purchased by Tocilescu for the National Museum of Antiquities from Bucharest, with great effort, in two stages, not entirely and consists of 23 pieces from *Tomis* and *Callatis*. The inscription was recently rediscovered in the deposits of the Institute of Archaeology "Vasile Pârvan" in Bucharest and presented in a temporary exhibition¹⁴.

Excepting one inscription from *Novae*¹⁵ for the rest of them the finding spot is unknown. The one from *Novae* was discovered by chance beside the Western gate. We can only assume that in that area there was a temple dedicated to this deity, especially because we are in the immediate vicinity of the limes road, passing through this fortress from West to East¹⁶.

Who are *Diviae*, *Triviae* or *Quadriviae*?

From etymological point of view the name derives from the Latin word crossroads - *Quadruium*. *Diviae*, *Triviae* or *Quadriviae* are protective deities of roads and travelers - no matter who they are: servants, merchants, soldiers. Deities are accompanied by epithets like *Augustae*¹⁷, *Caelestes*¹⁸ or *Sacrae*¹⁹. On the religious monuments they appear most often together with *Silvanus*²⁰ or *Genius Loci*²¹. Although less numerous, there are also associations with *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*²², *Genius civitatis*²³ or *Domus Divina*²⁴.

¹⁰ ILNovae 22, 23.

¹¹ CIL III 12349 = ILBR 40.

¹² AEM III 1879, p. 45, no. 19.

¹³ www.arheomedia.ro/monumente/D5118 / Photo by Cristina Alexandrescu, to whom I would like to thank for it.

¹⁴ „Jupiter on your side” is an exhibition dedicated to the relation between people and gods on the Lower Danube Area, organized by Cristina Alexandrescu from the Institute of Archaeology „Vasile Pârvan”, in collaboration with the History Museums from Alba Iulia, National History and Archaeology Museum Constanța, Bucharest (Memorial House dr. George Severeanu), with the support of the National Bank of Romania and Association ARA, within the ArheoMedia Project (PN II 2007-2013: RU/TE 113).

¹⁵ ILNovae 23.

¹⁶ ILNovae 23; KOLENDO 1990, p.233; MROZEWICZ 1985, p. 167-169.

¹⁷ e.g.: Leipnitz- EDH-Nr.: HD039149. URL: <http://www.epigraphische-datenbank-heidelberg.de/>; *Novae*- ILNovae 22.

¹⁸ e.g.: Westerwood- AE 1964, no. 175; Wright 1969, p.192-193.

¹⁹ e.g.: *Apulum* (Alba Iulia)- IDR III/5, 310; Scupi- IMS VI 13.

²⁰ e.g.: *Carnuntum* (Petronell)- CIL III 13463, 13475.

²¹ e.g.: *Vetera* (Xanten)- CIL XIII 8638.

²² Stuttgart-AE 1927, 0066, *Solva* EDH-Nr.: HD039149. URL:<http://www.epigraphische-datenbank-heidelberg.de/>

²³ Ladenburg- CIL XIII 6417

²⁴ Zabern- CIL XIII 11647

Representations of the female deities *Quadriviae* appear only on fragments of *terra sigillata*²⁵ (Fig. 5), where often are accompanied by protective snake of home and fields. Instead, there is only one altar with them²⁶. In terms of iconographic representation *Quadriviae* deities have their origin in representation of the *Matrones*: women in draped robes²⁷.

These deities were associated with gods *Lares*²⁸. They assume greater importance in the time of *Augustus*. About the same time appear names *Diviae*, *Triviae* and *Quadriviae*. *Lares Compitales*, gods of the streets of cities and their gates and *Lares Viales*, deities of roads outside the civil settlements, had a festival of their own - *compitalia* and a celebration in the Roman calendar, all established by the religious reforms initiated by *Augustus*²⁹.

Most inscriptions have been found in the two Germanys, also in *Rhaetia*, *Noricum*, *Pannonia Superior*, *Dalmatia*, *Dacia*, *Moesia Superior* and *Moesia Inferior*³⁰ (Fig. 6). In all border provinces the protective deities of roads had in addition security attributes related with boundaries of the empire. The cult has not been confirmed in either Gallic or Hispanic provinces³¹. Most dedications to the deities come from *Carnuntum*, today the city Petronell (Austria)³².

Where these deities originate from? In the specialized literature there are two different opinions. According to them, they are either Celtic or Celto-Germanic or Balkan, since they appear in inscriptions together with *Silvanus*, god of Illyrian origin³³.

Very probably, their cult was spread out due to the movements of military troops in provinces located along the border: Germany³⁴, *Pannonia*, and *Dacia* since the middle of the II century AD up to the beginning of the next century, especially during the reign of *Marcus Aurelius*³⁵.

Once established their origin it should be established whose type of worship - public or private - they belong to. The *Quadriviae* interested individuals as well as the local communities. Anyone traveling on the roads of the confines of the Empire or living near the *limes* make an offering to the goddesses to ensure themselves that roads are safe, free of obstacles and intrusions of peoples from the other side of the border. The soldiers themselves also wore special attention to these goddesses. A study of dedications in the provinces of Upper and Lower

²⁵ *Tabernae* (Rhinzabern): RICKEN, THOMAS 2005, vol. I, p. 76, tafel 62, no. 12; vol. II, tafel 274.2 and tafel 62.12; MATTERN 2005, p. 21-24.

²⁶ Stuttgart-AE 1927, no. 66.

²⁷ HILD 1926, p.1635-1639; MATTERN 2005, p. 21-24.

²⁸ Mainz- CIL XIII 11816.

²⁹ GALINSKY 2007, p. 78; BELAYCHE 2007, p. 279-280.

³⁰ PANAITE 2013 (in print).

³¹ In *Hispania* only one inscription was discovered at Laguardia: ELORZA 1967, no. 77: *Segilus et Rusticus f(ilius), Laribus Q(uadru)u(iis), pro salute, u(otum) s(oluerunt) l(ibentes) m(erito)*. In this province it is very well represented the cult of *Lares Viales*: CIL II 2518, 2572, 2987, 5734; AE 1973, 310; AE 1995, 720, 749; AE 2004, 731 etc

³² CIL III 4441, 13463, 13464, 13465, 13466, 13467, 13475, 14089; AE 1992, no. 1425.

³³ For the Illyrian origin: HEICHELHEIM 1963, p. 714-720; For the Celtic origin: IHM 1915, p. 1-7; DORCEY 1992 (*non vidi*) quoted by FERLUT 2011, p. 79.

³⁴ MATIJEVIĆ 2009, p. 71-144.

³⁵ MATTERN 2005, p. 21-24; FERLUT 2001, vol. I, p. 79.

Germany demonstrates that *Quadriviae* are worshiped especially in the private space³⁶, but do not missing inscriptions of public character, made either by soldiers³⁷, civil authorities³⁸ or local communities³⁹.

Dedications to *Quadriviae* discovered so far in *Moesia Inferior* are simple individual acts of worship. They include only the name of the dedicator without any other information about it. Even so, they show the presence of Western elements in the Lower Danube area. Equally they are important for multiple cultural contacts between various linguistic and cultural areas, also for acculturation process, reflected in this case by religion. On the other hand, due to the low number of dedications we cannot speak of a province-wide public worship of these deities. Their appearance is rather punctual, either linked to important structural moments - such as the coast road rehabilitation or individual acts of devotion.

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³⁶ e.g.: Strasbourg - *Septimius Victor* reconstructed an altar with a temple for *Quadriviae*, CIL XIII 5971; Mainz - *Ammonius* put a dedication to *Quadrubiae*, CIL XIII, 11823; *Apulum* - *Cornelia Daphnis* put a dedication for *Quadriviae* IDR III/5 309 etc.

³⁷ e.g.: *veteranus*: Windisch CIL XIII 5198; *centurio*: Mainz CIL XIII 6429a; *beneficiarius consularis*: Stuttgart CIL XIII 6437 etc.

³⁸ Koblenz - CIL XIII 7623: *Caius Crispinius Cladaeus* publican put a dedication to *Quadriviae* after finishing some constructions.

³⁹ Karlsruhe - CIL XIII 6315: *vicani Bibienses*.

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a.

b.

Fig. 1 a, b – Tomis, ISM II 116



Fig. 2 – Callatis, ISM III 30



1



2



3



Fig. 3 – 1: *Novae* (IL *Novae* 22), 2: *Novae* (IL *Novae* 23);
3: *Oescus* (CIL III, 12349 = ILBR 40).



Fig. 4 – Altar from *Tomis* (photo by Cristina Alexandrescu)

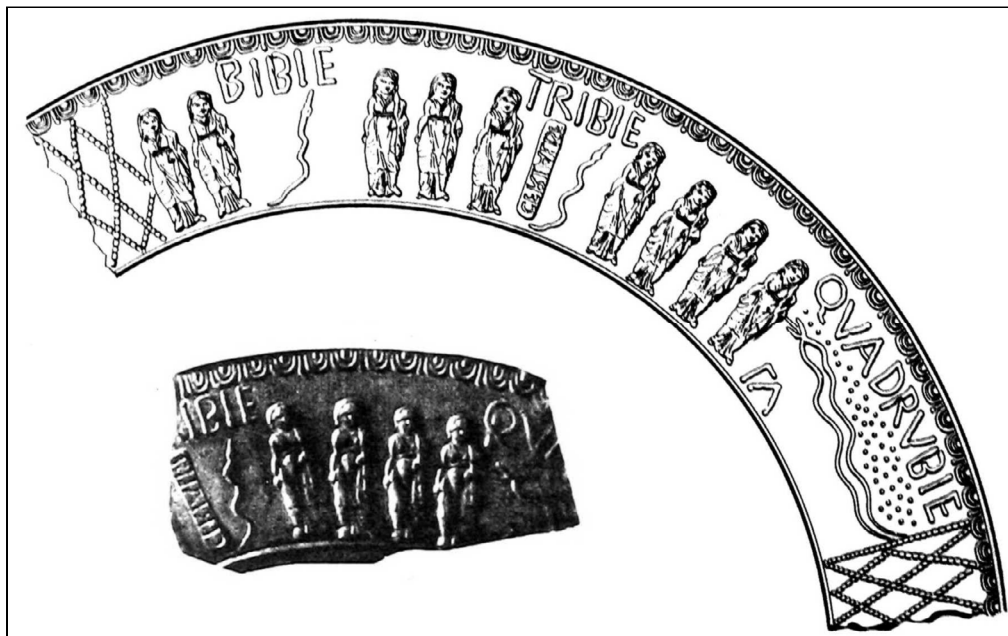


Fig. 5 – Fragments of *terra sigillata* from Zabern with the representation of *Quadriviae* (apud Ricken, Thomas 2005, vol. I, p. 76, tafel 62, no. 12; vol. II, tafel 274.2 and tafel 62.12).

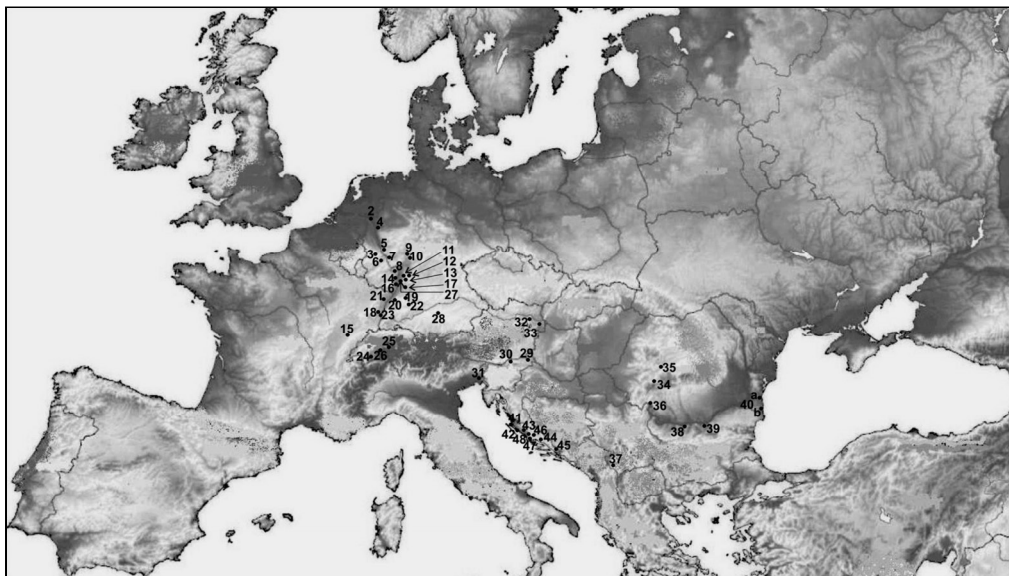


Fig. 6 – Inscriptions with dedications to *Diviae*, *Triviae* and *Quadriviae* - 1 Westerwood, 2 Xanten (Colonia Ulpia Traiana), 3 Zülrich (Tolbiacum), 4 Köln (Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium), 5 Bonn (Bonna), 6 Kruft, 7 Koblenz, 8 Mainz (Mogontiacum), 9 Butzbach, 10 Friedberg, 11 Gross-Gerau, 12 Obernburg, 13 Lorsch, 14 Worms, 15 Thil Chatel, 16 Speyer (Noviomaus/Civitas Nemetum), 17 Ubstadt-Weiher, 18 Zabern (Tres Tabernae Caesaris), 19 Pforzheim (Portus), 20 Karlsruhe, 21 Langensulzbach, 22 Stuttgart, 23 Strasbourg (Argentorate), 24 Avenches (Aventicum), 25 Windisch (Vindonissa), 26 Kaiseraugst (Castrum Rauracense), 27 Ladenburg Lopodunum (Civitas Ulpia Sueborum Nicrensium), 28 Augsburg (Augusta Vindelicorum), 29 Wagna/Leipnitz (Flavia Solva), 30 Lendorf (Teurnia), 31 Col du Monte Croce Canico (Iulim Carnicum), 32 Vienna (Vindobona), 33 Petronell (Carnuntum), 34 Sarmizegetusa (Colonia Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa), 35 Alba Iulia (Apulum), 36 Drobeta Turnu Severin (Drobeta), 37 Skopje (Scupi), 38 Gulijantsi (Oescus), 39 Svishtov (Novae), 40 Tomis (Constanța)/ Callatis (Mangalia) (?) (40a/ 40b), 41 Zadar, 42 Nadin (Nedinum), 43 Bribir (Varvaria), 44 Imotski/ Proložac, 45 Čitluk (Aequum), 46 Danilo Gornje (Rider), 47 Solin (Salonae), 48 Skradin-Maraguš (Scardona).