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*In memory
of Angeliki Laiou*

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THE BYZANTINE ROAD SYSTEM IN EASTERN THRACE: SOME REMARKS*

Andreas Kuelzer

Eastern Thrace, more or less identical with the area of nowadays European Turkey (*Trakya*), was the *hinterland* of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire for more than one thousand years, and therefore one of the most significant landscapes in the Eastern Mediterranean. But in aspects of historical geography our knowledge of the region is still limited: there may be some studies concerning smaller landscapes like the Bosphorus region, Mount Ganos (Işıklar dağı) or the Chersonese peninsula, also a few articles on settlement places like Bizyē (Vize), Heraclea (Marmaraereğlisi) or Yaremburgaz, but there was no overall view, no full statement of the facts up to recent times. The same applies for the road system of the area.

It is a common knowledge that already in Roman times there were three main roads leading through Eastern Thrace: 1. the road from Belgrade that followed the river Danube up to the Black Sea coast, where it turned to the south and ran more or less parallel to the coastline up to the Bosphorus; 2. the so-called *via militaris* or *via Traiana* which started in Belgrade as well and ran from Adrianople (Edirne) through central parts of Eastern Thrace to Arcadiopolis (Lüleburgaz), Druzipara (Büyük Karıstıran) and Tzurulon (Çorlu) up to the shore of the Sea of Marmara; and 3. the *via Egnatia* which led from Dyrrachium to Thessalonica and further to Constantinople connecting the Adriatic

* This paper is based on Kuelzer 2008: 192–204 “Die Verkehrsverbindungen. I. Die Straßen”.

with the Black Sea.¹ But even the course of these main communication roads is not absolutely well-known, for many track sections one can only make an educated guess.

While the first-mentioned road was only scarcely used in the middle ages, the two other roads were of great importance throughout the Byzantine and Ottoman times up to present days. Despite the continuous use however, one has to keep in mind the existence of numerous smaller course deviations. For example, this is provable in the environs of Aproi, of Rusion and of Heraclea. The written sources mention scarcely ever details of the routes; archaeological remains are rare compared to other areas of the Balkans. Milestones for example, so common along the river Danube or in the western parts of the Haimos peninsula are only rarely preserved in Eastern Thrace.

Frequently the main routes were connected with minor streets or pathways which are not mentioned in our sources at all. Sometimes you have to predict routes considering that settlements of a higher ecclesiastical, military or economic importance were certainly part of a national road system.² So the bishop's sees of Nikē (Havsa) and Pamphilon (Uzunköprü), of Rusion (near Keşan), Aphrodisias (Evrese) and Hexamilion (Ortaköy) were surely connected with each other. The using of some connections however is only theoretically feasible, but in reality impossible because of difficulties in supply, of incalculable potential dangers or of lacking re-enforcements. According to the pattern developed in 1977 by Friedrich Hild³ the road system of Eastern Thrace is presented as follows: connections from North-west to South-east are described with A, from South-west to North-east with B, from West to East with C, and finally, from North to South with D (fig. 1).

1. Koder 2001: 66–68; Miller 1916: 493f. Cf. also the well-done book of Frei-Stolba 2004.

2. Cf. Bellavia 2006: 185–98.

3. Hild 1977: 10.32 fig. 1.

1. North-western – South-eastern Connections (A)

The most important north-western – south-eastern connection in Thrace is the *via militaris*. The Greeks called it *basilikē hodos*, the Slavs *carski pat*, the Turks *Stambul yol*. The road which we shall call A 1 here connects Central Europe with the Byzantine capital Constantinople and, furthermore, with the Near East. The route and its *mansiones* are already described in great detail in the *Itinerarium Antonini* from the late third century A.D.; in addition the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* from 333 A.D. mentioned the *mutationes*, the places where the travellers could change their horses. Further details are presented by the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, which originally was drawn up in the second quarter of the fourth century A.D. by the use of older sources⁴ (fig. 2). The course of this important communication route up to Adrianople, the capital of the Thracian province of Haemimontus, was already described by Peter Soustal some years ago.⁵

From Adrianople the road led in south-eastern direction, passed Nikē and Bulgarophygon (Babaeski) and came to Arcadiopolis, the first more inhabited town in the Thracian province of Europa. Even in the years 1762 and 1826 European travellers mentioned at the city boundaries a lot of big stone slabs covered already with moss and grass and nowadays of course not longer existing.⁶ Furthermore the road led in south-eastern direction to the *mutatio* Narco, a place only mentioned in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* and probably locatable south-west the today's village Evrensekiz. From there the road went to Druzipara. This town was famous in early Byzantine times because of its shrine of holy Alexandros; this saint was murdered in the late third century A.D., his burial-place became afterwards the centre of a national pilgrimage. At the south-western city boundary of Druzipara one can find an Ottoman

4. Avramea 2002: 57–90; Soustal 1991: 132–34; Burian 1998: 1179–82.

5. Soustal 1991: 132–34. Cf. Jireček 1877: 10–48.

6. Jireček 1877: 48; Miller 1916: 538.

bridge with many fragments from Byzantine times revealing that there was a medieval predecessor.

Going south-east from Druzipara, the traveller reached the *mutatio* Tipsos near the great bridge of Kırkgöz. Passing the river Rēgina there he came to the Campus serenus and to Tzurulon. But before doing so, approximately two kilometres in front of the town, one had to cross an old bridge with five vaults leading across the river Xērogypsos, today's Çorlu suyu. According to all late-antique itineraries afterwards the road led to Heraclea, the former capital of the Thracian province Europa. On the way the traveller passed another station called Beodizum near today's village Türkmenli; nearby are still the remains of an old bridge. But Heraclea began to lose its importance in middle Byzantine times in favour of Raidestos (Tekirdağ), a vivid town some miles further in the west. Therefore the course of the road changed, Heraclea lost the direct connection with A 1. The *via militaris* went now in a more south-eastern direction and reached the shore of the Sea of Marmara only east of Palaia Hērakleia (Eski Ereğli), like the route today.⁷ The further course of the road is identically with the *via Egnatia* and will be described later.

The *via militaris* was used in the late sixth century A.D. by the Avars and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the crusaders. After the year 1204 it was the usual way for the Latin armies to reach Adrianople and the northern banks of the river Hebros. Even in Ottoman times it was the usual road for the European ambassadors to cross the Balkans for the Golden Horn and Constantinople. The cruising speed was different: Procopius of Caesarea in the sixth century claimed five days for the route from Adrianople to Constantinople, Michaēl Attaliatēs in the eleventh century only three days. The slowly travelling crusaders needed some decades later nine or even ten days, but Bertrandon de la Broquière in 1433 only six days.⁸ The travellers had to cross 85

7. von Hochstetter 1870: 193–212.

8. Avramea 2002: 66.

rivers between Adrianople and the capital of the Byzantine Empire, all of them supplied with bridges already in Roman times.⁹ Most of them should be existent in the middle Ages. In Byzantine times the area was densely wooded, but under Ottoman rule mainly cleared; so since the middle of the 19th century the tree population of the region is not worth mentioning anymore.¹⁰

In Eastern Thrace the main communication route A 1 was accompanied by two roads, one in the north, one in the south; they ran more or less parallel but were of much smaller importance. The southern route A 2 led from the lower Arda valley throughout the valley of river Erythropotamos, which flows into the river Hebros near Didymoteichon. From here the traveller came to Pamphilon, today's Uzunköprü, where he had to cross the river Rēgina more likely on a bridge than by ship. Afterwards, the road led in an east – south-east direction to the bishop's see of Chariupolis (Hayrabolu), turned then to the south-east and reached the shore of the Sea of Marmara and the *via Egnatia* near Raidestos.¹¹

The road A 3 in the North of the *via militaris* connected the Tundža valley with Eastern Thrace. It ran from Skopelos (Yoğuntaş) to Petra (Kayalı), then to Quaranta Chiese, today's Kırklareli. Afterwards it passed Gehenna (Kaynarca) and Brysis (Pınarhisar). At the southern side of the Istranca Mountains the road crossed the border between the Thracian provinces of Haemimontus and Europa and reached the ancient town of Bizyē, the capital of the Thracian kings in pre-Roman times. In a south-eastern direction the road led in the region of the later town of Saray, founded only in the 14th century by the Ottomans. Afterwards it came to the strongly fortified town of Sergentzion (Binkılıç), the last bishop's see in front of the Makra Teichē.

9. Jireček 1877: 48.

10. Cf. Boué 1889: 71.

11. Avramea 2002: 67f.; Asdracha 1976: 34f.

Possibly the road divided here: one fork (A 3/1) followed the Istranca dere more or less in eastern direction, crossed south-west of Karacaköy the Anastasian wall and led to the north-west shore of Lake Derkos, where it met the Roman Black Sea road A 4. The other fork (A 3/2) led more or less accordingly to the modern road in south-eastern direction and passed the Makra Teichē near the modern village of Gümüşpınar. In the area around you can find two bigger fortresses. From Gümüşpınar one can not reconstruct the route in the greatest detail: it ran somehow south-eastwards to Incegiz, where it led into the so-called *strata vetus*. In Ottoman times different travellers mentioned the old paths crossing there.¹²

An inscription documents the rebuilding of a bridge in the track section between Quaranta Chiese and Bizyē in 773/74 according to orders of the late emperor Constantine V (741–775).¹³ Also the cleric Matthew of Ephesus could have used this road in summer 1322 when he was on his way from Constantinople to his new metropolis in Brysis. The traveller characterized the road, strictly speaking the part between the Makra Teichē and his destination, as rarely used. Therefore it was in such a bad condition that one often lost one's way. Many times his company was in fear of surprise attacks, a lot of graves along the road called the victims of the local tramps to mind.¹⁴ Probably only in Ottoman times the track between Saray and Incegiz was transferred further to the south; some travellers of the 19th century mentioned a route more or less identical with the modern railway line: the Makra Teichē was passed in the north of Kurfalı, not before the surroundings of the modern village Halaçlı the route led to the north-west.¹⁵

The above mentioned communication road A 4 was constructed in Roman times as well. It connected the Delta of the Danube with

12. Jireček 1877: 53; von Hochstetter 1870: 201.

13. Asdracha 1989-91: 245–48.

14. Reinsch 1974: *epist.* 64.

15. Boué 1854: 135; idem 1889: 520; von Hochstetter 1870: 201–04.

the Bosphorus, running parallel to the extremely important ocean route constantly used by the navy and the mercantile marine.¹⁶ Generally the road ran near the coast line; only in cases of rough territory or long peninsulae leading into the Black Sea it came deeper into the heartland. Some parts of this long road are mentioned in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, but not the area of Eastern Thrace. The *Tabula Peutingeriana* as well has some gaps in this region. The course of the road up to the city of Staniera, today's İğneada, was already described by Peter Soustal some years ago.¹⁷

From Staniera the road led some six kilometres southwards; at H. Paulos it turned to the south-west into the heartland to by-pass 364 m high Bezirğan Tepe and 313 m high Kokmuş Tepe from the western side. Then it turned again to the south-east, passed Sophires (Kışlacık) and Hamidiye and reached the sea-side by Mēdeia (Midye), in its lower part following the Papuç dere.¹⁸ The opinion of some scholars that the mountain range could be passed from the east, along the coastline¹⁹ seems to be improbable because of the difficult terrain. Also no remains of a road have been found there. South of Mēdeia was a connection to Bizyē and to the central parts of Eastern Thrace; here again the road turned into the heartland to by-pass the mountain range of Alibaba Tepe (239 m) and Kızılağaç Tepe (181 m). Afterwards it turned to south-east and followed the coastline up to Podima. North of Karacaköy the A 4 passed the Makra Teichē and came to today's village Ormalı (Skyla) and to Lake Derkos, meeting the road A 3/2 from Sergentzion. Between Lake Derkos and the coastline the road ran to Philea (Karaburun) and then, in a more or less south-eastern direction, to Kilios / Kumköy. The last track section led in a distance from four to five kilometres from the sea to Thimea at the confluence of the Bosphorus and the Black Sea.

16. Tomaschek 1886: 303–09; Soustal 1991: 146; Miller 1916: 495–516.

17. Soustal 1991: 146. Cf. Miller 1916: 499.

18. Cf. Schaffer 1904: 196–206, 201.

19. Miller 1916: 513f.; Schreiner 1986: 27.

From here the road turned to the south, as *Tabula Peutingeriana* shows, to meet the Golden Horn and Constantinople.²⁰

A big section of this road should be used in the year 705 by Justinian II who came with his entourage from the Bulgarian territory to Constantinople to overthrow the intermediate emperor Tiberius II and to rule again.²¹ Seven years later, in 712, the Bulgarians marched on this road to Philea to start from there a pillage of the Thracian *hinterland* of Constantinople.²² In the middle of the 19th century as well the road was rarely used between Mēdeia and the Bosphorus; in many sections travellers could only walk, but riding was impossible due to the difficult terrain.²³

In the lower part of this long ancient communication road started the much smaller road A 5 leading from Philea and Derkos to Pyrgos (Kemberburgaz) and further to the Golden Horn, in some parts more or less parallel to the river Barbysēs, today's Kağithane suyu. The path is mentioned in the *Life* of Cyrill of Philea from the twelfth century; it was used several times by the holy man himself but also by different travellers from Constantinople who intended to visit the monastery *tu Sōtēros* in the vicinity of the Black Sea.²⁴

2. South-western – North-eastern Connections (B)

The first road in Eastern Thrace which can be assigned to this classification (B 1) started in the bishop's see of Ainos (Enez) in the Thracian province of Rodopē, near the Delta of the river Hebros and

20. Miller 1916: 514f. See below the section concerning the road D 5.

21. De Boor 1883: 374; Mango 1990: 42; Beševliev 1969: 483–95, 489. With reservations Schreiner 1986: 34.

22. De Boor 1883: 382; Beševliev 1969: 489f.

23. Boué 1889: 521; Isambert 1873: 656.

24. Kaplan 1995: 191–205.

led to Kypsela (Ipsala) on the *via Egnatia*. One can not reconstruct its course in the greatest detail today; either it ran through the marshland of Lake Stentoris where travellers were delighted by the richness in fish but had to suffer from the thousands of midges or it described a wider detour over the gentle mountain range further in the east.²⁵ The last variant is documented in a travelogue from the middle of the 19th century. From Kypsela the road ran like today in north-eastern direction to Imbrasos and further to the Bishop's see of Garella (Altınyazı). The road went then parallel to Basamaklar dere and met east of today's village Haralgöne the important communication road D 1 which connected the see of Pamphilon with the cities of Kissos (Keşan), Rusion, Aphrodisias and Sausadia (Kavak) in the south.

The Chersonese peninsula south of the just mentioned settlement places had due to its geographical position two roads of this category: in the north ran the road B 2, being only of a smaller importance. The terrain allows no other course than today: the road started at Tuz Gölü, in the area of the ancient cities of Alōpekonnēsos and Limnai. From today's village Küçükanaftarta the road led south of the 280 m high Tekke Tepe to Turşun where a turn-off ran northwards parallel to the small river Göl dere to Ece Limanı, place of the ancient city of Drabos. The road B 2 led from Turşun in north-eastern direction to Taīphyrion (Tayfur) and Angelochōrion (Fındıklı). On both places one can find several *hagiasmata* and remains of churches from post-Byzantine times. Southwards from Bakla Tepe the road came to Neochōrion (Yeniköy), a place with ancient and Byzantine remains. At the modern village of Güneyli there is a turn-off to the north, to the place of the ancient village of Idē which is only mentioned by Ps.-Scylax in the fourth century B.C. Soon afterwards, some three kilometres south-west of Bolayır, the Byzantine village of Plagia, the road met the more important road B 3.

25. Boué 1854: 106; Avramea 2002: 70; Soustal 1991: 138.

This road started in the extreme south-west of the Chersonese peninsula, in the area of ancient Elaius. It ran to the village of Krithia in the interior and met the shore of the Hellespont south of Kilitbahir, eventually in the neighbourhood of Sünbüllü dere. Here are no steep coasts anymore. The road ran parallel to the coast through Madytos (Eceabat) and Koila and passed near the Byzantine fortress of Sēstos the river Kavakaltı dere, the ancient Sigos. There a turn-off ran northwards to the modern village of Yaluva with its numerous archaeological remains and then further to the road B 2. The main road followed the coast line in north-eastern direction; parallel to the Aigospotamos (Cumalı dere) there was another connection to the smaller road B 2. Partly taking course through the interior, the road B 3 reached Kallipolis (Gelibolu). Approximately in the area of today's Bolayır Iskelesi it left the coastline and met soon afterwards the road B 2. In Plagia was a turn-off northwards to the Gulf of Saros, to Bakla Liman, the place of ancient Kardia. The road ended at the bishop's see of Aphrodisias.

The road from Aphrodisias to Kallipolis is already mentioned in the *Itinerarium Antonini* and estimated at 24 Roman miles; from Kallipolis the travellers ferried across the Dardanelles to Abydos in Asia Minor.²⁶ The road from Sēstos to Kallipolis and further to Aphrodisias is also shown on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. The *Geographus Ravennas* mentioned in the eight century A.D. based on much older sources from the third century A.D. the settlement places of Sēstos (*Sextos*), Kallipolis (*Calipolis*), Aphrodisias (*Afrodisia*) and Koila (*Cela*), even though in a false geographical order.²⁷ The likewise mentioned place-name *Leuce* refers to the Byzantine village of Leukē or to the Leukē Aktē.²⁸

Some eight kilometres before the road B 3 reached Aphrodisias, just in front of the former bishop's see of Sausadia, the today's small village of Kavak started the road B 4. This one ran to Hexamilion and

26. Cuntz 1929: 333.7.

27. Schnetz 1940: V 12, 10–13; Miller 1916: 589, 603f.

28. Schnetz 1940: V 12, 9.

further to the Sea of Marmara which was reached north-west of the Leukē Aktē, near the fortress of H. Geōrgios, mentioned in the twelfth century by an Arabic traveller. More or less following the coastline, the road led in north-eastern direction to the city of Raideustos. Near Peristasis (Şarköy) there was a turn-off northwards (D 2) to the *via Egnatia*. The road B 4 passed the cities of Heraclea (the smaller one, today Eriklice), Myriophyton (Mürefte) and Chōra (Hoşkōy) and came to Ganos (Gaziköy), a metropolis since 1329 at the latest. Shortly behind this city the road came to the interior because of mighty steep coasts; it passed the villages of Eudēmion (Uçmakdere) and Neochōrion (Yeniköy), both with numerous remains from Byzantine times. Afterwards the road met again the coastline, crossed Kumbaon and Panium (Barbaros) and reached the *via Egnatia* in the vicinity of Raideustos.²⁹

In the twelfth century the time for travelling from Ganos to Rusion was supposedly only one day.³⁰ In the years 1326 or 1327 travelled Geōrgios Oinaōtēs from Constantinople to Raideustos, using the *via Egnatia*. From there he went further to Mount Ganos using the road B 4 which he characterized as arduous.³¹ A vivid description of the whole distance between the villages near the Makra Teichē, the Isiklar dağı and Hexamilion was written in the second half of the 19th century by the Russian scholar Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus.³²

Some twelve kilometres north-east of Raideustos, near the village of Karaevli (Hēraion Teichos), the road B 5 diverged from the *via Egnatia* to the city of Tzurulon. This road was used for example in the year 1306 by the *megas hetaireiarchēs* Dukas Nostongos for a successful campaign against the Catalans staying in Raideustos. In the autumn of the same year also the Catalans used the road for a campaign. In Ottoman times the B 5 was lengthened in north-eastern direction; henceforth the

29. Dimitroukas 1997: 366; Tomaschek 1886: 331f.

30. Nedkov 1960: 44f., 116.

31. Ahrweiler 1996: 9–21 and 23–27; Avramea 2002: 71.

32. Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1886: 65–113. Cf. Isambert 1873: 674–78 as well.

road led from Tzurulon across the above mentioned Xērogypsos to the environs of today's village Çerkesköy. There it changed its direction northwards and met the road A 3 near Saray.³³ If this way should be existent in Byzantine times at all (neither Çerkesköy nor Saray were founded then), it was surely of no higher importance: this track section was certainly not a main communication road between Tzurulon, Bizyē and the different settlement-places at the Black Sea coast.

3. Western – Eastern Connections (C)

The *via Egnatia* (C 1) is the most important western – eastern connection in Eastern Thrace; besides the *via militaris* A 1 it is the most famous and significant communication road in the Balkan peninsula in Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman times at all. The name of the road is due to the Roman *proconsul* Cnaeus Egnatius, known to us thanks to an inscription found in Macedonia in 1973. The road connected Apollōnia and Dyrrachium at the Adriatic Sea with the Bosphorus; it passed Ohrid and Thessalonica, Philippi and Trajanopolis. The first station in Thrace was Topeiros near the Modern Greek village of Paradeisos. The course of the *via Egnatia* through the Thracian province of Rodopē up to the city of Kypsela at the eastern bank of the river Hebros was described by Peter Soustal some years ago.³⁴

At this point the ancient geographer Strabōn, whose work is the only literary source mentioning the Egnatia, ended his description; also the measurement with Roman milestones ended there. The continuation of the road from Kypsela to the Bosphorus which today is also called Egnatia was certainly constructed at a later time; but in the late third century A.D. it existed, because the *Itinerarium Antonini* refers to

33. Boué 1889: 521.

34. Soustal 1991: 136–38.

it.³⁵ In Kypsela the Egnatia met the road B 1 from the Aegean Sea to Garella; it led in south-eastern direction, probably south of the 130 m high Bayırbağ Tepe, to the area of today's Keşan where in the fourth century A.D. also the *mutatio* Drippa could be found. The road continued slightly southwards from today to the settlement places of Rusion and Bulgarköy, today Yenimuhacir,³⁶ a village always mentioned in the travelogues of the 19th century. Near Haliç it came to its present way and reached Malgara. But only some kilometres afterwards the course differed again from today's route: it led north of 247 m high Ballı Tepe to the environs of the village Kermeyan, some four Kilometres east-south-east of Yürük. Here was the place of the important town of Aproi, founded by the Romans, mentioned in numerous sources like the *Itinerarium Antonini*, the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* or the *Tabula Peutingeriana*.³⁷ Just before the Egnatia reached the town it crossed the road D 2 which led southwards to Mount Ganos, the shore of the Propontis and further to the Chersonese peninsula or northwards to Chariupolis and to the *via militaris*. From Aproi the C 1 led in eastern direction to Inecik, the Byzantine Bishop's see of Chalkis. Nearby was the *mutatio* Bedizo, too. Near Raideostos, the *mansio* Registo or Resisto of the late-antique itineraria, the road met the shore of the Sea of Marmara. Here the road met also the road A 2 from Chariupolis and Pamphilon.

More or less following the coastline the traveller came near Karaevli to the crossroad with the road B 5 to Tzurulon, passed afterwards the *mutatio* Aerea or Hiereo near today's Köprüce Çiftlik and reached Heraclea. In north-eastern direction the road crossed the Kınıklı dere, passed then the village of Eski Ereğli and the bishop's see of Daneion (Kınalıköprü).

35. Cuntz 1929: 332.2–9; Lolos 2008: 119f.; Oberhummer 1905: 1989f; Tafel 1842: 57f.

36. Boué 1854: 148.

37. Oberhummer 1905: 1991f.

At this point, before reaching the *mutatio* Baunnae (today's Papazlı) twelve miles east of Heraclea, the older course of the *via Egnatia* left the coastline and led in north-eastern direction into the interior, it came to Kainophrurion, possibly near the modern village of Kurfali. This section of the road (C 1/1), called *strata vetus* by Eutropius, is described by the *Itinerarium Antonini* and the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. One can not reconstruct the course in the greatest detail: possibly the way ran parallel to the Kola deresi. Somehow in this area, near the coast or deeper in the interior, was the meeting point with the *via militaris* A 1. Approximately in eastern direction the road led to Inceğiz, where the *Tabula Peutingeriana* shows the *mansio* Ad statutas. Here was the cross way with the road A 3/2 leading to Sergentzion and Bizyē. Afterwards the road turned to the South-east and passed the bishop's see of Metrai (Çatalca), and, over some Roman bridges, the marshland behind the Athyra Kolpos. This road section was still used in the 19th century by a European traveller.³⁸ A minor road led in south-eastern direction to the Sea of Marmara, the main road ran eastwards to Melantias, mentioned in the *Itinerarium Antonini*, and the fortress of Schiza, the later Yaremburgaz. Here again was a cross-road: a local line led southwards to the Propontis, through the marshland east of the lagoon of Küçük Çekmece (Rēgion); the main connection ran eastwards south of the later villages of Kalphas (Kalfa) and Litres (Esenler) to Constantinople. Still in the 19th century travellers described in numerous parts of this road the old pavement.³⁹

A newer course of the *via Egnatia*, the so-called *strata nova*, followed from Daneion eastwards the coastline of the Sea of Marmara (C 1/2); this one was probably constructed in the days of the emperor Constantine the Great on the basis of an ordinary coast path which was already used in the early fourth century B.C. by Xenophōn and

38. von Hochstetter 1870: 195–200.

39. Jireček 1877: 52f.; Miller 1916: 539f.

his entourage on their way from Byzantium to Perinthus / Heraclea.⁴⁰ The strengthening of the road should be one of the first measures of the emperor, because already in the third decennium of the fourth century the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* described this route. In later times the *strata nova* became the usual communication road from Constantinople to Heraclea and Raideustos which eclipsed the *strata vetus* totally. From Daneion and the *mutatio* Baunnae this road led to the important town of Sēlymbria (Silivri), founded still in the seventh century B.C. on a steep slope some 50 m over the sea-level. From there the *strata nova* led eastwards to Epibatai (Selimpaşa) south of the 75 m high Kartal Tepe, to Makros Aigalos (Kamiloba) and Oikonomeion (Kumburgaz). In this area a traveller of the 17th century located the late-antique *mutatio* Callum.⁴¹ Afterwards the road ran south of the 173 m high Manastırbayırı; but without toughing Damokraneia, today's Çöplüçe,⁴² it turned to the interior and passed Kallikrateia, today's Mimarsinan, in the tenth century the place of death of saint Paraskeuē Nea, and Athyra (Büyük Çekmece). The C 1/2 crossed the agricultural area of Angurina and led south of the 198 m high Sancak Tepe in south-eastern direction to Myrmēx and further to Rēgion, the last *mansio* mentioned in the *Itinerarium Burdigalense* before Constantinople. Here was a cross-road with a minor road leading to the *strata vetus*. The *strata nova* followed the coastline, passed Yeşilköy, the Byzantine village H. Stephanos, and Bakırköy, place of the Hebdomon; after the mighty fortress Strongylon it ended in front of the Theodosian walls of Constantinople, in the area of today's Zeytinburnu.

The Byzantine capital should be entered usually through one of the southern city gates; the Pylē tu Rēsiu, today's Mevlevihanı Kapı, however laid to high in the North to be a common entrance for the

40. Cf. Jireček 1877: 53.

41. Grelais 1998: 40f.

42. Cf. Ahrweiler 1996: 11.23.

travellers.⁴³ In early Byzantine times the coastal road between Rēgion and Strongylon was rough and without pavement; only in the sixth century the emperor Justinian I ordered to widen the way and to improve it by a solid pavement. Even the dangerous wooden bridge across the Myrmēx was replaced by a stony one.⁴⁴ This bridge was repaired in the ninth century by the emperor Basil I. Another bridge led over the mouth of Athyra Kolpos; in late Byzantine times it was characterized as unstable, it was replaced then by Mehmed Fatih in the middle of the 15th century. At that time the whole road was in a bad condition.⁴⁵ In the middle of the 16th century the observations of the travellers varied: the Venetian Catharin Zen described the whole road section between the cities of Rēgion and Tzurulon as “muddy”, the contemporaneous Hans Dernschwam on the other hand reported that especially between Sēlymbria and Constantinople the old Roman pavement could be seen everywhere, travelling was therefore much easier than in other road sections.⁴⁶ Even travellers of the 19th century mentioned on several occasions the old pavement which could be seen in different places;⁴⁷ today these parts are mostly lost due to modern road construction.

Less important was the western – eastern Connection C 2 which started in Ainos and ran parallel to the northern shore of the Gulf of Saros. First of all it led from the Hebros Delta in south-eastern direction south of the 385 m high Hisarlı dağı to Maïstros (Yenice) and Amygdalia (Çavuşköy), villages with several important Byzantine monasteries in their *hinterland*. From Büyükevren where still settlement remains can be found the road came to Vakıf; going round the western Tuzla Gölü it led to Karaincirli, another village with settlement remains. Parallel to the Ayı dere C 2 ran to Yayla Köy; there was a cross road to the

43. Jireček 1877: 53–55; Miller 1916: 527.

44. Haury 1964: IV 8.

45. Cf. Avramea 2002: 70f.

46. Cf. Popovič 2000: 74f.

47. Boué 1854: 47; Isambert 1873: 675.

fortress near Mazabınası at the shore. The Soluca dere was passed by a bridge; afterwards the road came to Danişment and Erikli south of the 153 m high Bacı Tepe. In eastern direction the road passed the second Tuzla Gölü and reached Mecidiye, where minor routes led to the south to Magarisi and Ibrikbaba. The main road ran parallel to the Yerlisu dere to Maariz, from there to Sazlıdere and south of the 367 m high Koca Tepe to the bishop's see of Aphrodisias. Here was the meeting point with the communication routes B 3 and D 1. In the year 1307 soldiers of the Catalan Company led by Bernat de Rocafort chose this road to conquer the fortress of Magarisi and to besiege the city of Ainos.⁴⁸

4. Northern – Southern Connections (D)

The most western road in Eastern Thrace leading from the North to the South (D 1) started in the province of Haemimontus and connected the *via militaris* near Nikē with the Chersonese peninsula. The road leading from Skopelos and Petra ran in southern, then in south-western direction to Pamphilon, possibly by crossing the area of the modern villages Kircasali and Değirmenci. After Pamphilon the road led to the south, met east of Haralgöne the road B 1 to Kypsela, then near Keşan the *via Egnatia*. After passing the Bishop's see of Rusion the road led to the South-east, and going round Koca Tepe from the North it met the road C 2. At Aphrodisias it met B 3 which granted the connection to the Chersonese peninsula. The lower part of this road was used in March 1190 by the Crusaders under Barbarossa on their way to Kallipolis. Near *Rossa* the road was because of heavy rainfalls in such a bad condition that the crusaders were obliged to leave their wagons behind and to reload their goods on horse-backs.⁴⁹

48. Soustal 1991: 170; Failler 1999: 700f.

49. Chroust 1928: 70.

The above mentioned road D 2 passed through mount Ganos; it connected the *via Egnatia* with the shore of the Sea of Marmara, near the Bishop's see of Peristasis. Near Gölcük the road crossed a river with the same name; afterwards it led west of a 361 m high mountain to the area of the modern villages Isaklı, Emirali and Ballı. Passing the 204 m high Saray Tepe the road met the *via Egnatia*, much closer to Aproi than to Malgara. The road from Aphrodisias to Aproi shown on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*⁵⁰ should be in reality a combination of the roads B 3, B 4 and D 2. This road should be used by the Ottomans after they had conquered the fortress of Odgönlek earlier than 1354. The course of their campaign shows that the road from Aproi to Chariupolis which is documented in late antiquity by the *Tabula Peutingeriana* existed also in late Byzantine times; but maybe it was closer to the Ana Dere that time than today when it runs more in the West.⁵¹ From the town of Chariupolis the D 2 led northwards to the Bishop's see of Bulgarophygon and further, more or less parallel to the modern railway net, to Quaranta Chiese. In the year 1090 the Pechenegs penetrated into Thrace; after a successful battle against a Byzantine army they used this road up to the South of Chariupolis.⁵²

The military and ecclesiastical importance of the Thracian cities Brysis and Arcadiopolis allows us to predict the road D 3 as a direct connection. It probably ran parallel to the rivers Kaynarca dere and Yancıklar dere, like the road today.⁵³ The emperor Constantine V should have used this road in the year 775 when a serious illness stopped his campaign against the Bulgarians and forced him to retreat to Arcadiopolis.⁵⁴

The seaport of Raideustos was the starting point of the important

50. Miller 1916: 526.589.

51. Miller 1916: 526.592; Vogiatzēs 1987: 33f.

52. Reinsch and Kambylis 2001: VII 1; Soustal 1991: 133, 223.

53. Cf. Bellavia 2006; Soustal 1991: 145.

54. De Boor 1883: 448.

communication road D 4; in early Byzantine times it was one of the main routes towards the river Danube. First of all the road ran northwards passing the region of today's village Muratlı. The *via militaris* was met near Druzipara. There D 4 turned marginally to the north-east to pass the villages of Pınarbaşı, Ahmetbey which was already inhabited in Roman times, Çövenli and Hasbuğa. The road came to Bizyē where it met the road A 3. A minor road led in eastern direction to Mēdeia; the main route ran northwards to the villages Sophires and Sergen (Sarakēna), afterwards to the metropolitan's see of Karabizyē (Demirköy). Here was a turn-off again: the road D 4/1 led in east – north-eastern direction to Staniera at the shore of the Black Sea to meet there the Roman road A 4 and to hold the line with the seaports Agathopolis and Sozopolis. The other road D 4/2 ran in north-eastern direction from Karabizyē to the mining centre Malko Tărnovo, then northwards to Debeltos and Poros. There it crossed the Roman road A 4, too, and led to the cities of Pyrgos (Burgaz) and Anchialos (Pomorie).⁵⁵ Several times this road was mentioned by the historian Theophylaktos Simokatēs: in the year 592 the Avars pushed forward from Anchialos to Druzipara and to Heraclea; in the years 593 and 594 the Byzantine armies marched in the opposite direction to the environs of Druzipara and Anchialos.⁵⁶

When going from Tzurulon to Bizyē or Brysis the Byzantine traveller probably had to pass the important city of Druzipara; in contrast the idea of a direct connection leading northwards⁵⁷ is unconvincingly: no relevant remains are mentioned in the travelogues or found in the area up to now.

The last northern – southern connection we want to mention here is the old road D 5 running parallel to the Bosphorus from Thimea to Constantinople.⁵⁸ The road is testified by the *Tabula*

55. Jireček 1877: 50; Soustal 1991: 145f.

56. De Boor 1887: 227f., 230f., 246; Schreiner 1986: 32.

57. Avramea 2002: 67; Schreiner 1986: 32. Soustal 1991: map.

58. Miller 1916: 514.

Peutingeriana; in its northern part the terrain forced it to run more in the interior. It met the shore near Hieron (Rumelikavağı) and followed the coastline to Sōsthenion (Istinye), Laimokopia (Rumeli hisarı), Anaplis (Kuruçeşme), and Diplokiōnion (Beşiktaş) up to Galata. Most probably there was already in Byzantine times a parallel route leading from Dikaia Petra (Kefeli Köy) and Therapeia (Tarabya) to the Golden Horn to avoid the time-consuming way around the numerous bays of the Bosphorus.⁵⁹

Beyond all doubt the Byzantine road system in Eastern Thrace was much more extended than we are able to illustrate in this small essay: numerous minor roads for example which are undocumented in the written sources but restorable on the base of the later Ottoman road system should have existed in the *hinterland* of Constantinople⁶⁰, in the area of the Istranca mountains in the wooded border zone of the Thracian provinces Haemimontus and Europa or even throughout the ravines of mount Ganos. Many of them connected fortresses and settlement places with the national road system and were therefore a useful but often neglected part of the Byzantine world.

59. Cf. von Hammer 1822: Appendix I, for the Ottoman times.

60. Cf. for example the road system depicted by Fr. Kauffer, "Plan von Constantinopel und seinen Vorstädten (1786)", in von Hammer 1822: II, Appendix II.

ABBREVIATIONS

ΑΔ	Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον
CFHB	Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae
DNP	Der Neue Pauly
EHB	<i>The economic history of Byzantium from the seventh through fifteenth century</i> , Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, vols. 1-3, 2002.
Έλλ. Φιλολ. Σύλλ.	Ὁ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἑλληνικὸς Φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
RE	Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft.
TIB	Tabula imperii byzantini

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FIGURES

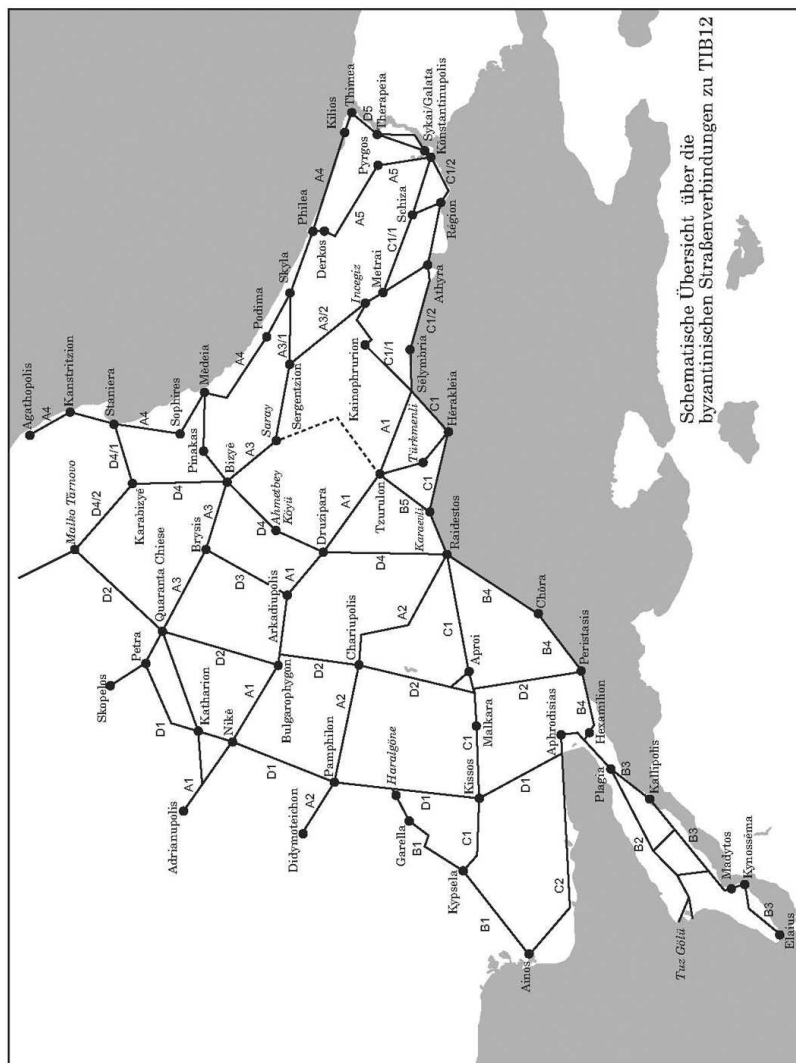


Fig. 1. Diagram of the Byzantine Road system in Eastern Thrace.
Cf. Kuelzer 2008: 193.

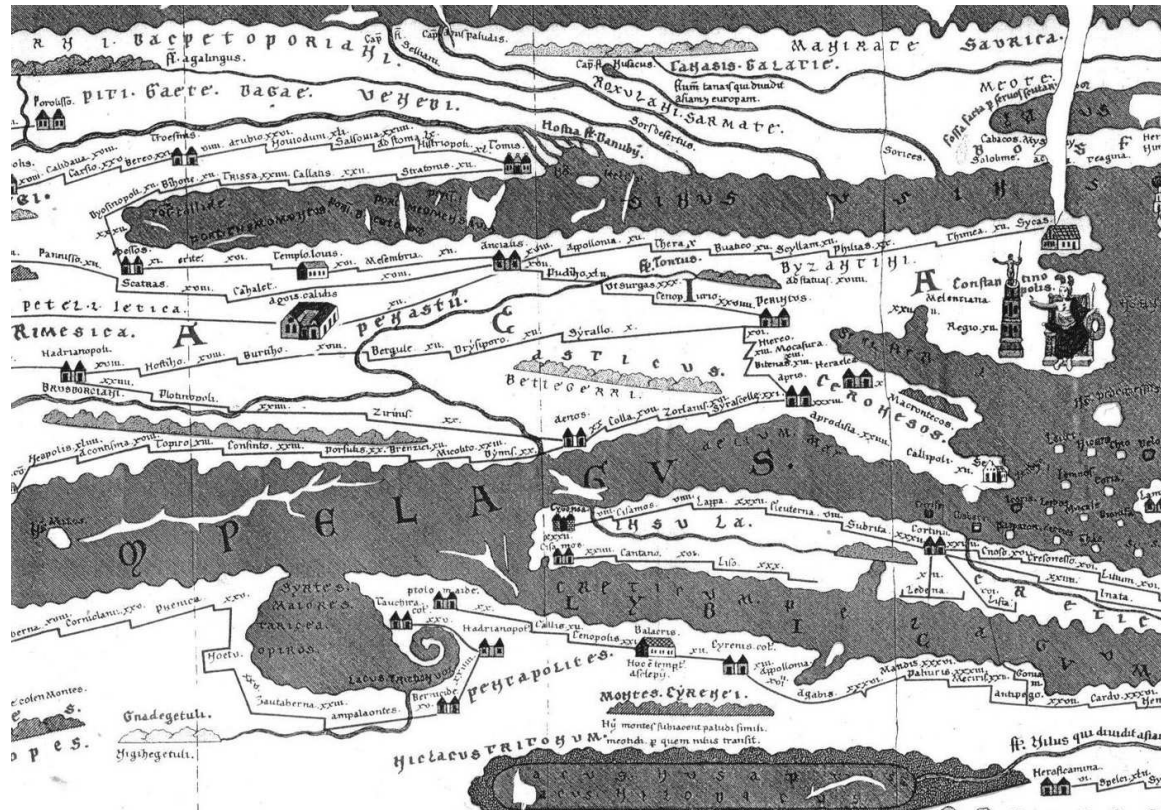


Fig. 2. *Tabula Peutingeriana*, fol. VII and VIII “Eastern Thracian”. Cf. *Tabula Peutingeriana*. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat und Kommentar von E. Weber. Graz 1976.