

WHEN THE PROVINCE TAKE CARE OF ITS OWN COIN SUPPLY. THE CASE OF THE TOWN OF DROBETA IN ROMAN DACIA

Abstract: Using comparative analysis and the most recent coin site-finds publication from the Roman site of Drobeta in Roman Dacia (nowadays Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania), the present paper demonstrates that when a site from a province is closed to an official mint from another province (e.g. Viminacium in Moesia Superior) the coin supply comes mainly from this mint. However, the recent coin evidence from the site of Drobeta proves that the official mint of Dacia, which produced the series of 'PROVINCIA DACIA' type was still a main supplier of Drobeta especially after AD 250.

Keywords: 'P M S COL VIM' and 'PROVINCIA DACIA' coins, coin supply, Roman Dacia

Cristian Găzdac

Institute of Archaeology and Art History Cluj-Napoca
cgazdac2000@yahoo.co.uk

Ágnes Alföldy-Găzdac

National History Museum of Transylvania
Cluj-Napoca
alfoldyagnes@yahoo.com

In a previous study we have demonstrated that the Roman state was actually the one who controlled the provincial mints that issued the coin series of 'P M S COL VIMINACIUM' and 'PROVINCIA DACIA', Viminacium in Moesia Superior (nowadays, Kostolac, Serbia) and Apulum in Dacia (nowadays, Alba Iulia, Romania) (Map 1).

The two coinages were struck in bronze starting with AD 239 (P M S COL VIM) and AD 246 (PROVINCIA DACIA) following the Roman official bronze denomination scheme of sestertius, dupondius and as.



Sestertius P M S COL VIM

Sestertius P M S COL VIM



As P M S COL VIM

As P M S COL VIM



Dupondius P M S COL VIM

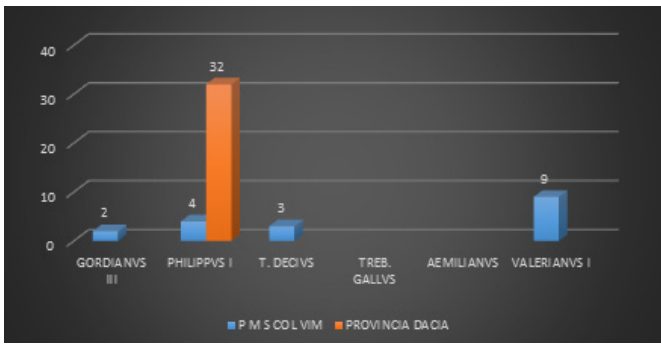
Dupondius P M S COL VIM

As the two coinages were destined for the army, for both payment and propaganda, the state/emperor just ensured a full control on them (minting, distribution), as it was also demonstrated by these coinages circulation between the provinces of Dacia, Pannonia and Moesia Superior. The present study comes with another aspect: who was the main supplier with these bronze coins, which replaced Rome's bronze issues in the provinces of Pannonia, Moesia Superior and Dacia.

The last decade witnessed the publication of numismatic monographs for various sites from the former Roman province of Dacia which provided an important data on the quantity and proportions of the two coinages.

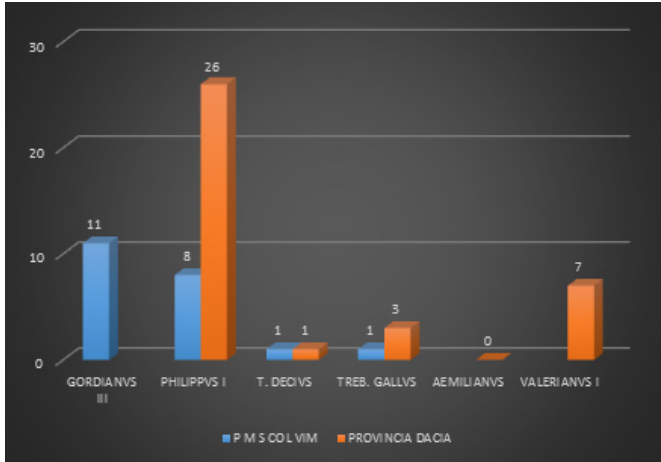
Starting from north to south, the most important sites and well-documented – from numismatic point of view – of Dacia, show quite a similar pattern.

Porolissum (nowadays, Moigrad, Romania), a military site and a *municipium* (Map 2)



for the coins minted in the time of Philippus I.

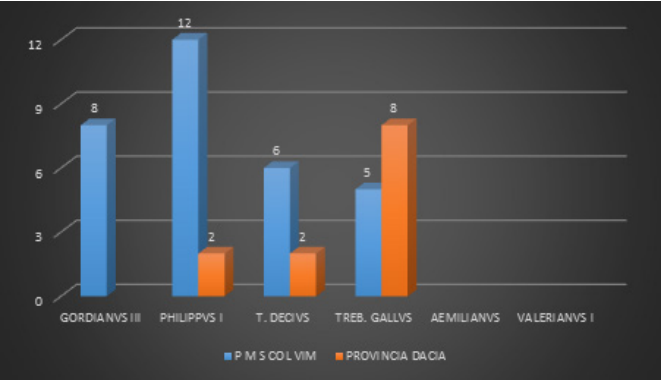
Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (nowadays, Sarmizegetusa, Romania), *colonia*



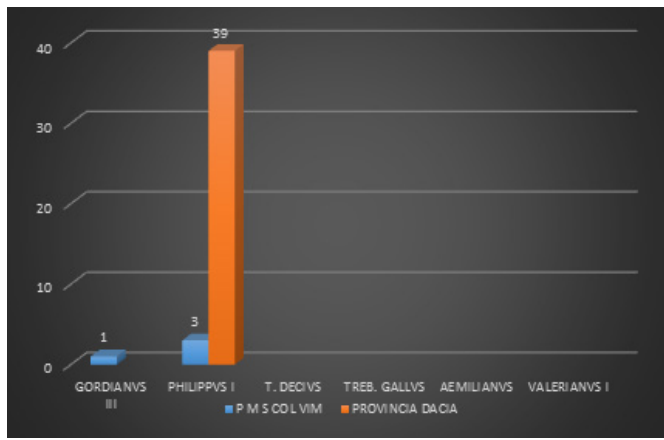
Unlike the previous sites, at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, the coinage 'PROVINCIA DACIA' is found for other issuers, Trajan Decius, Aemilianus and Valerianus I. At the same time, it demonstrates the higher frequency of this coin at this site that the coinage 'P M S COL VIM'.

Drobeta (nowadays, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Romania), auxiliary fort, *colonia*, Roman harbor and bridge on the Danube.

Up to 2015 the graph for this site looked as follows:

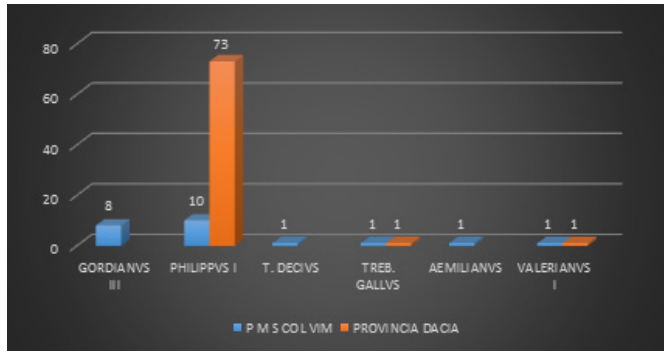


At the first site, the picture is different from what we have seen before. In the case of Drobeta, the coins 'P M S COL VIM' dominates the finding number up to Trebonianus Gallus while the 'PROVINCIA DACIA' coins were found in very small number and overtake the 'P M S COL VIM' only



The graph indicates a short but overwhelming presence of the coinage 'PROVINCIA DACIA' at Porolissum in comparison with the coinage 'P M S COL VIM'.

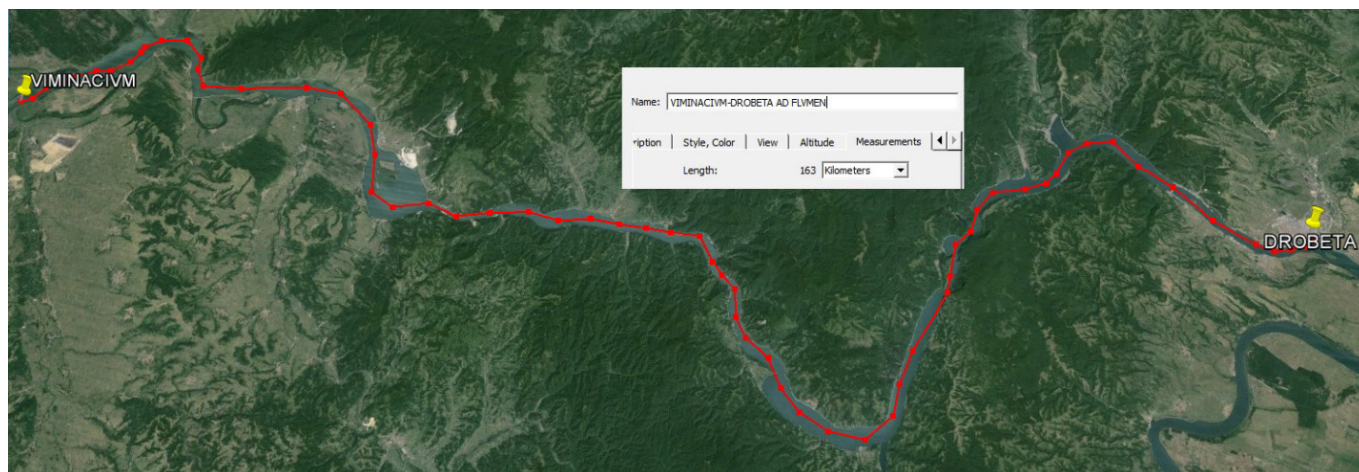
Potaissa (nowadays, Turda, Romania), legionary fort (the 5th Macedonica legion) and *colonia*.



The graph indicates the same dominance of 'PROVINCIA DACIA' coins issued in the time of Philippus I and the poor presence of both coins after AD 249.

Apulum (nowadays, Alba Iulia, Romania), legionary fort (the 13th Gemina legion) and two *coloniae*.

Like in the case of Porolissum, this graph shows the low presence of 'P M S COL VIM' in comparison with the large one of 'PROVINCIA DACIA' but only



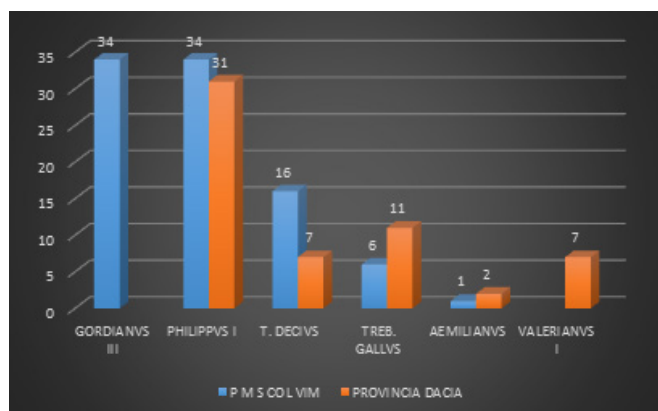
The distance between Viminacium and Drobeta on the Danube River.

for the reign of Trebonianus Gallus.¹

The explanation may have come from the geographic position of Drobeta. The site is located on the left bank of the Danube River, just 163 km downstream from Viminacium. Therefore, one could suggest that the close vicinity to the mint of Viminacium has led to the bronze coin supply of the site of Drobeta mainly with the coins from this mint.

However, the exhaustive research on the coin collection of the 'Iron Gates Region' Museum from Drobeta-Turnu Severin led to a different situation.

The recent publication of the numismatic monograph of the Roman Drobeta² has allowed us to draw another graph.



This new graph of the 'P M S COL VIM' and 'PROVINCIA DACIA' points out that, due to its close vicinity, the Viminacium mint was clearly a main supplier with bronze coins for Drobeta, but the province of Dacia was still an important counterpart on this enterprise.

A possible explanation for the higher frequency of 'PROVINCIA DACIA' coins after the reign of Trajan Decius is the re-direction of coin supply from Viminacium towards Pannonia where many troops were concentrated in the period from AD 251 to 260 following the internal conflicts with usurpers and struggle for power.³

REFERENCES

GĂZDAC 2010

Găzdac, C.: *Monetary circulation in Dacia and the provinces from the Middle and Lower Danube from Trajan to Constantine I (AD 106-337)* [Coins from Roman Sites and Collections of Roman Coins from Romania 7 (ed. Găzdac, C.)] (Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House).

GĂZDAC/ALFÖLDY-GĂZDAC 2008

Găzdac, C./Alföldy-Găzdac, Á.: The management of a monetary crisis? The 'P M S COL VIM' and 'PROVINCIA DACIA' coinages in the Roman monetary policy of the 3rd century AD, *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 116/117, 135-171.

GĂZDAC/COCIȘ 2004

Găzdac, C./Cociș, S.: *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* [Coins from Roman Sites and Collections of Roman Coins from Romania 1 (ed. Găzdac, C.)] (Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House).

GĂZDAC/GUDEA 2006

Găzdac, C./Gudea, N.: *Porolissum* [Coins from Roman Sites and Collections of Roman Coins from Romania 2 (ed. Găzdac, C.)] (Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House).

GĂZDAC/NEAGOE/ALFÖLDY-GĂZDAC/NEAGOE 2015

Găzdac, C./Neagoe, M./Alföldy-Găzdac, Á./Neagoe, O.: *Drobeta. The never abandoned city of Roman Dacia* [Coins from Roman Sites and Collections of Roman Coins from Romania 9 (ed. Găzdac, C.)] (Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House).

GĂZDAC/SUCIU/ALFÖLDY-GĂZDAC 2009

Găzdac, C./Suciu, V./Alföldy-Găzdac, Á.: *Apulum* [Coins from Roman Sites and Collections of Roman Coins from Romania 5 (ed. Găzdac, C.)] (Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House).

MARTIN 1992

Martin, F.: *Kolonialprägungen aus Moesia Superior und Dacia* (Budapest-Bonn: Akadémiai Kiadó-R. Habelt).

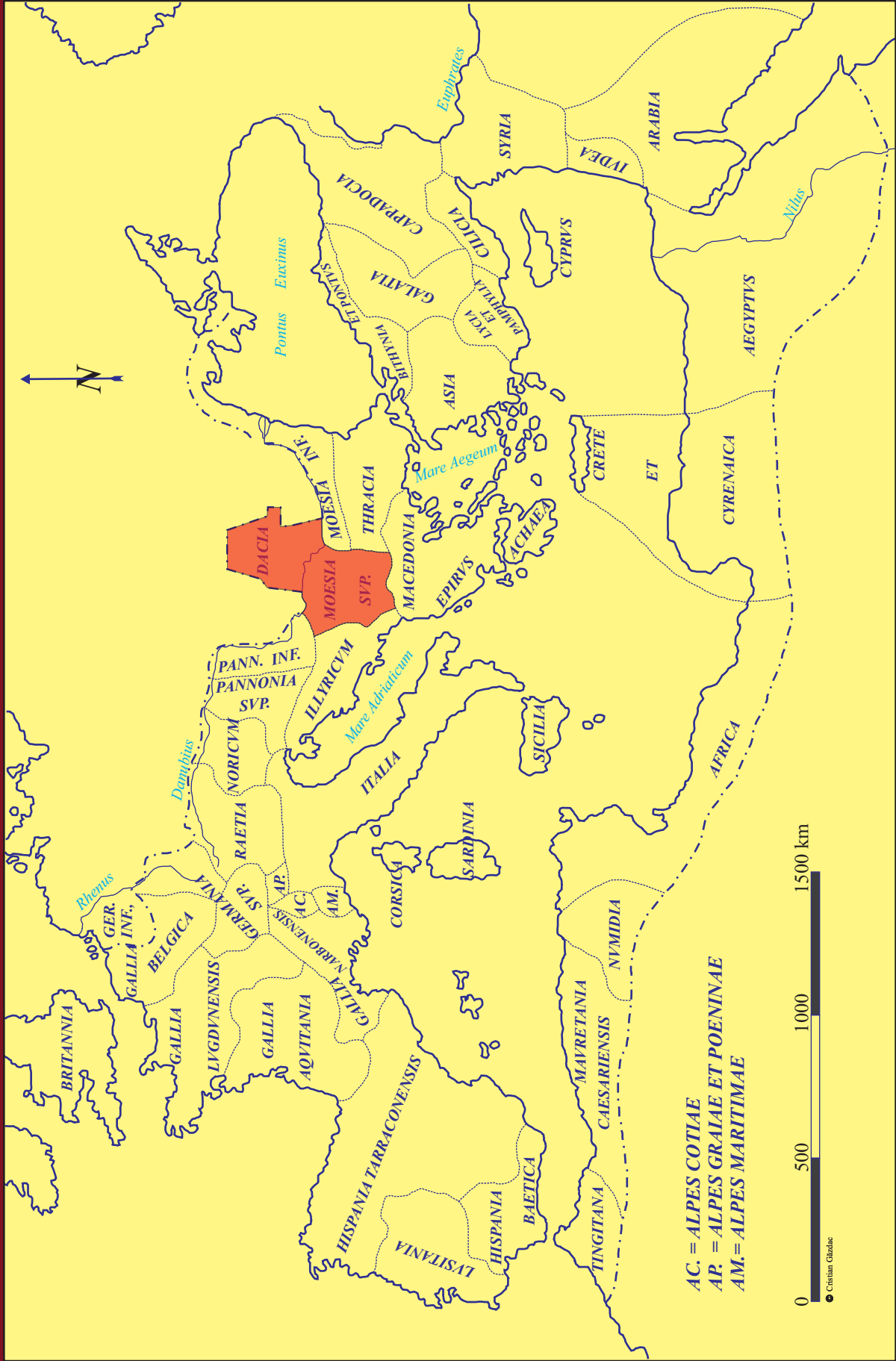
PÎSLARU 2009

Pîslaru, M.: *The Roman Coins from Potaissa. Legionary Fortress and Ancient Town* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega).

¹ GĂZDAC 2010, CD-ROM, Catalogues/Site finds/Dacia site finds – Drobeta, 8-9.

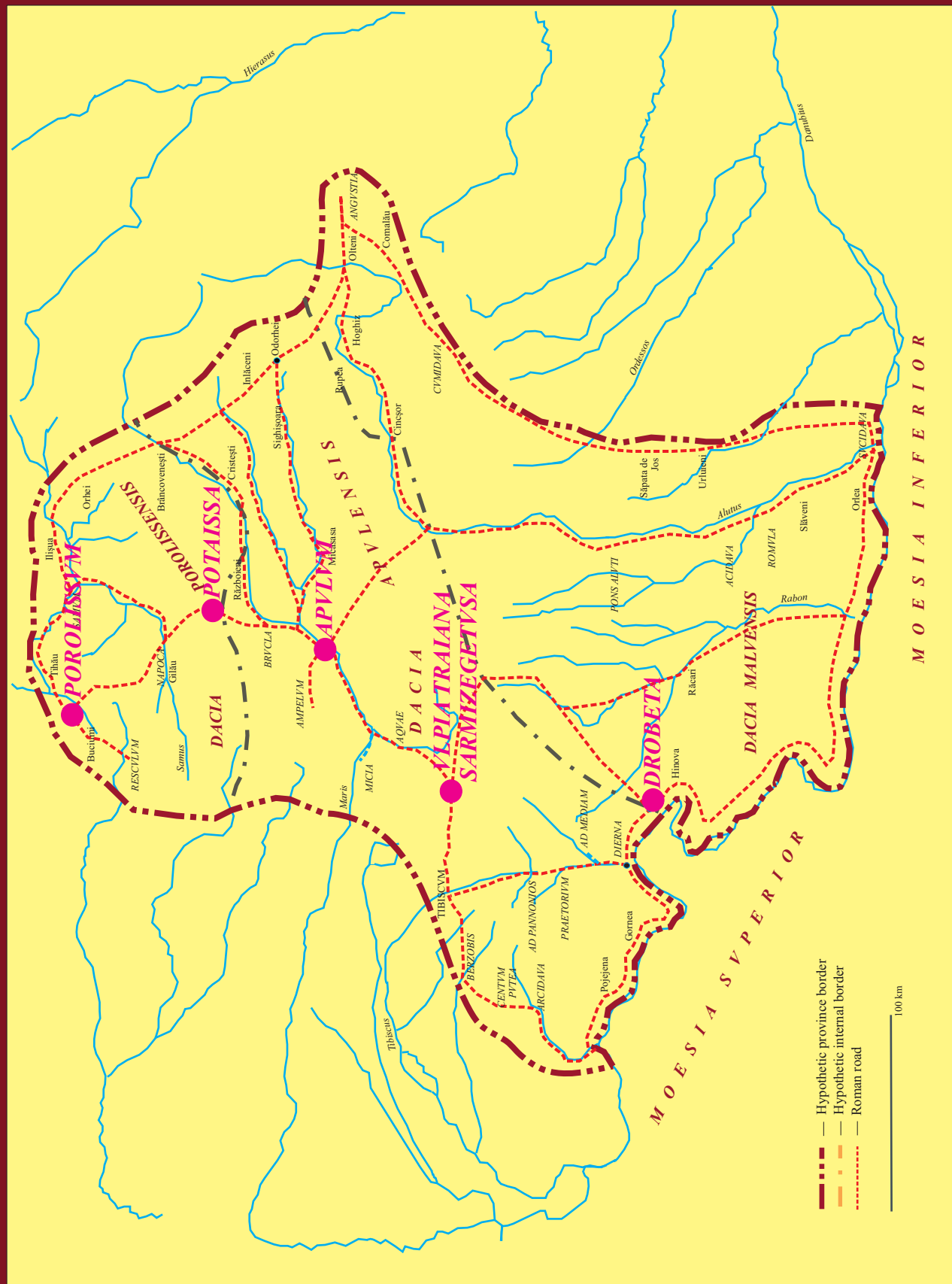
² GĂZDAC/NEAGOE/ALFOLDY-GĂZDAC/NEAGOE 2015, 77

³ GĂZDAC/ALFÖLDY-GĂZDAC 2008, 142-144.



AC. = ALPES COTIAE
 AP. = ALPES GRAIAE ET POENINAE
 AM. = ALPES MARITIMAE

Map 1. The Roman Empire pointing the location of provinces Moesia Superior and Dacia



Map 2. Roman Dacia pointing the sites mention in this study