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ANCIENT HISTORY

AN EVALUATION OF THE ANCIENT TRAPEZOUS-SATALA ROAD: KARAKABAN ROAD AND ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

Abstract: The historical geography of Anatolia is not only a transit route for travelers, merchants, and armies but also an area where ideas, religions, and cultures have been formed. This situation in Anatolia stems from its strategic location, where many historical roads intersect. So much so that the “Spice Road” and “Silk Road,” the most critical military and commercial routes of Ancient History, pass through these lands. The branches of these roads that pass through Anatolia are fed by many alternative routes connecting with the sea. One of these alternative routes is the “Karakaban Road,” which originated from Trabzon Port and was frequently mentioned by travelers who visited the region in the 18th and 19th centuries. This road aligns with the “Trapezous-Satala Road” in the Tabula Peutingeriana, a map showing Roman roads and accommodation places.

This study evaluates the relationship between the “Trapezous-Satala Road” in Tabula Peutingeriana and the “Karakaban Road” in Ottoman sources. For this evaluation, systematic and technological field surveys were conducted on the road routes based on information from historical sources. Supported by the historical structures and archaeological materials identified in the field surveys, the current possible location of the road was determined. Thus, in light of written and archaeological data, the probable location of the Karakaban Road today and its use and strategic importance throughout history was revealed.

Keywords: *Antiquity, Karakaban, Satala, Tabula Peutingeriana, Trapezous.*

Osman EMİR

Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey
oemir@ktu.edu.tr

İsmail KÖSE

Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey
ismailkosetr@ktu.edu.tr

Yasin TOPALOĞLU

Atatürk University, Turkey
tyasin@atauni.edu.tr

INTRODUCTION

The most crucial port city of ancient Pontus was undoubtedly Trapezous (Trabzon). Although Trapezous is widely mountainous and hilly, it is also at the crossroads of important commercial and military routes.¹ Trapezous is the only settlement between Polemonium (Bolaman?) and Colchis with a land connection to its hinterland.² The importance of the strategic location of Trapezous was better seen during the Roman period in the struggle against the Parthians.³ However, the Paryadres Mountains (North Anatolian Mountains), with a length of 482 km and a height of 3000 m, greatly limited the connection of the coastal parts of Pontus with the inland regions. For this reason, transportation between the coast and the hinterland is only possible through the valleys and passes formed by the

¹ ÇİGDEM 2007, 133.

² DOĞANCI 2020, 129-130.

³ EMİR/İNAN 2018, 62-67.

rivers. Due to these geographical features, the road routes between Trapezous and the hinterland did not change much throughout history.

The earliest written records concerning the historical roads and passes from Trapezous to the interior date back to the Late Roman period. This information is found in the “Itinerary Antonine (Itinerarium Provinciarum Antonini Augusti)” and the “Tabula Peutingeriana.” The Itinerary Antonine is a significant source that enumerates the names of 225 stops along Roman roads and the distances between them. Conversely, the Tabula Peutingeriana is a 12th or 13th-century copy of a Latin map created in the 1st century AD, which was periodically updated until the 4th and 5th centuries AD. The map depicts the ancient roads (viae publicae) of the Late Roman period, from the British Isles across the Mediterranean Basin and the Near East to India and Central Asia. Measuring 680 cm × 34 cm, the map’s westernmost section is missing, yet it represents the world as the Romans understood it. This map is crucial in informing travelers about key cities, transit stations, and stops along the Roman road network.⁴ Although these two works, which illustrate cities and stopping points on ancient Roman roads, are older, they are generally believed to originate from the 4th or 5th century AD.⁵ Both sources indicate two important land routes to Trapezous. In the Itinerary Antonine, the first route travels south from Trapezous, first to Ad Vinesimum (approximately 30 km) and then to Zigana (approximately 33 km).⁶ Throughout history, Maçka has been referred to by various names, including Ad Vinesimum, Dikaisimon, Magnana, Karydia, and Matsouka.⁷ Other waypoint locations beyond Zigana include Thia (approximately 35 km) and Sedisca (approximately 25 km). After roughly 35 km from Sedisca, the road continues to Domana and Satala (approximately 27 km).⁸ This road is believed to have served as the primary all-season route linking the port of Trapezous to Satala during the Roman era. Currently, only the locations of Trapezous, Zigana, and Satala (Gümüşhane/Sadak) are known.⁹ However, there are also differing views regarding the current locations of the other waypoints mentioned in

the Itinerarium Antonini (Ad Vinesimum, Thia, Sedisca, Domana). Based on the distance from the known locations of Trapezous and the other waypoints, geographic formations, and additional sources, the current locations of the road stops may be as follows (Tab. 1).¹⁰

According to the Itinerarium Antonini, this route, with a total length of 135 milia passum (ca. 200 km), overlaps with the “Old Zigana Road”, also known as the “Silk Road” during the Ottoman period. It was reconstructed in the 19th and 20th centuries AD according to the techniques and vehicle passage of the era.¹¹ This road served as the main route from Trabzon to the interior until 1987-1988, after which a new road was built on the opposite side of the valley, parallel to the old road. Therefore, although the Old Zigana road has lost importance, it remains usable (Map 1).

The Tabula Peutingeriana (Peutinger’s map) is another source for Roman roads and range points. According to paleographic evidence, this map was drawn up in the late 12th and early 13th centuries AD. However, some historians believe that it reflects the geographical, ethnographic, and political situation of the 1st century AD.¹² Rathmann disagrees with the dating to the first century AD, arguing that the map was first created in the Hellenistic Period and was developed and finalized over about 700 years.¹³ The Tabula Peutingeriana covers the world of Late Antiquity from the Atlantic Ocean to India and the North Sea to the mountains on Africa’s southern coast. The main contents of the map include cities, stations, crossroads, river crossings, and the distances between them, as well as an extensive network of roads connecting them. Many settlements, fortresses, centers, altars, and temples are marked with symbols. Numerous mountains and rivers are also depicted, and the names of people and provinces are provided. There are approximately 3,500 names on the map. This map, created as a propaganda tool, resembles a road guide regarding functionality.¹⁴ Eleven parchments are joined together to form a roll-shaped map, part of which pertains to Pontus and its environs. Tabula Peutingeriana is recognized as the most critical cartographic relic of antiquity, representing the lands of Pontus and its southern coast.

Tab. 1. Trapezous-Satala Route Road Stops and current location suggestions in Itinerarium Antonini.

Location	Location	Distance	Distance (1 milia passum = 1.478 m, Powell, 2018, p. 334)
Trapezous (Trabzon)	Ad Vinesimum (Maçka?)	XX milia passum	30 km (Approx.)
Ad Vinesimum (Maçka ?)	Zigana	XXII milia passum	33 km (Approx.)
Zigana	Thia (Beşkilise, Mescitli?)	XXIV milia passum	35 km (Approx.)
Thia	Sedisca (Tekke?)	XVII milia passum	25 km (Approx.)
Sedisca	Domana (Köse?)	XXIV milia passum	35 km (Approx.)
Domana	Satala (Sadak)	XVIII milia passum	27 km (Approx.)

⁴ RATHMANN 2013, 203-222.

⁵ PODOSSINOV 2019, 42-51.

⁶ It. Ant. 216.4-6; 217.1-4.

⁷ EMIR 2020, 2.

⁸ It. Ant. 216.4-6; 217.1-4; AHLFELDT, 2015-2017.

⁹ BRYER/MITFORD 1985, 51-52; MITFORD 2000, 130-131; DOGANCI 2020, 143.

¹⁰ MITFORD 2000, 131; 2018, 348-349; FRENCH 2016, 681; DOGANCI 2020, 143.

¹¹ ERUZ/ERBAŞ 2020, 53.

¹² PODOSSINOV 2019, 203.

¹³ RATHMANN 2013, 203.

¹⁴ DILKE 1987, 238; BURULDAĞ 2023, 99-100.

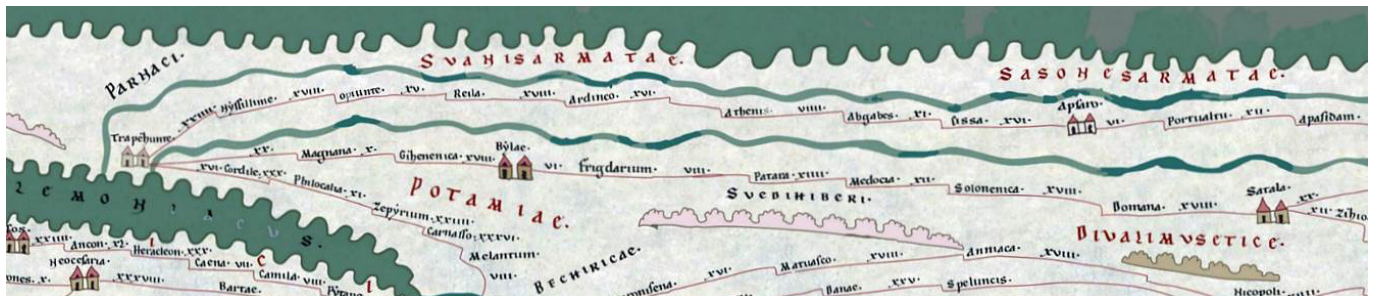


Fig. 1. Tabula Peutingeriana: Trapezous-Satala Road (www.tabulapeutingeriana.de/tabula.html?segm=9).

Tabula Peutingeriana shows a route from Trapezous to Satala and the distances between the range points on this route. According to the Tabula Peutingeriana (X.3-5), after Trapezous, the route first reaches Magnana (ca. 30 km), then Gizenenica (ca. 15 km), and then Bylae (ca. 27 km). After Bylae, it connects to Frigidarium (ca. 9 km), a stopping point, and then to Patara (ca. 12 km). From there, the road continues south to Medocia (ca. 21 km) and Solonenica (ca. 18 km).¹⁵ From then on, the road joins the other in the Itinerarium Antonini. After Solonenica, it continues to Domana (ca. 27 km) and Satala (ca. 27 km). (Fig. 1).¹⁶

The range points in the Tabula Peutingeriana suggest that the Trapezous-Satala road in the Itinerarium Antonini follows a different route. This indicates the existence of two distinct routes reaching Satala via Trapezous during the Roman period. The Trapezous-Satala range points in the Tabula Peutingeriana share some points with those found in the geographical work of Ravenna (Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia) compiled in the 8th century AD. The range points in Ravenna are listed from south to north as Satala, Domana, Soloni Mecia (Solonenica), Medoia (Medocia), Patra (Patara), and Bile (Bylae).¹⁷ This suggests that the Trapezous-Satala route in the Tabula Peutingeriana was actively used until the 8th century. However, as noted in the Itinerarium

Antonini, the present location of the range points along this route is debatable. For example, Kiepert's map offers the first assessment of the current location of the range points in the Tabula Peutingeriana. According to Kiepert, the route includes Trapezous, Magnana (Maçka), Gizenenica (Karakaban), Bylae (Kulat Inns), Frigidarium (Krom Valley), and Domana (Köse). While primarily supporting Kiepert, Bryer presents a different proposal for the Magnana-Maçka pairing, suggesting Hortokop Castle.¹⁸ He argues that Hortokop Castle, located near Maçka, may be a more suitable match, as no remains from Antiquity or the Middle Ages are found in Maçka.¹⁹ Mitford's route is comparable to Kiepert's and Bryer's, but there are some differences in the range points. Mitford²⁰ suggested the "Hocamezarı Inns" or "Meşeiçi Inns" located 9 km south of Maçka for Gizenenica in the Tabula Peutingeriana, and the "Hanzarya Inns" for Frigidarium. In another study, Mitford²¹ revised his suggestion for Gizenenica to "Karakaban." The route proposed by modern studies for the Trapezous-Satala road in the Tabula Peutingeriana is consistent, albeit with minor differences.²² Therefore, the location suggestions for the now-agreed Trapezous-Satala road are outlined as follows: Trapezous-Maçka-Meşeiçi Inns-Hocamezarı-Karakaban Mountain-Kolat Inns-Hanzarya Inns and Gümüşhane (Map 1).

Tab. 2. Trapezous-Satala Route Road Stops in the Tabula Peutingeriana and their current location suggestions.

Location	Location	Distance	Distance (Approx.)
Trapezous (Trabzon)	Magnana (Maçka /Hortokop?)	XX milia passum	30 km (Approx.)
Magnana	Gizenenica (Hocamezarı/ Meşeiçi)	X milia passum	15 km (Approx.)
Gizenenica	Bylae (Kolat Inns?)	XVIII milia passum	27 km (Approx.)
Bylae	Phryg(i)darium (Hanzarya Inns?/Krom)	VI milia passum	9 km (Approx.)
Frig(i)darium	Patara (Maden Inns?)	VIII milia passum	12 km (Approx.)
Patara	Medocia (Agyarlar?/Imera)	XIII milia passum	21 km (Approx.)
Medocia	Solonenica (Leri/Murathanoğulları/Kov?)	XII milia passum	18 km (Approx.)
Solonenica	Domana (Köse?)	XVIII milia passum	27 km (Approx.)
Domana	Satala (Sadak)	XVIII milia passum	27 km (Approx.)

¹⁵ Tab. Peut. X.3-5.

¹⁶ BRYER/WINFIELD 1985, 48-52; MITFORD 2000, 128-131; FRENCH, 2016, 27.

¹⁷ Geog. Rav. II.12. 14-19; II.17. 13-14.

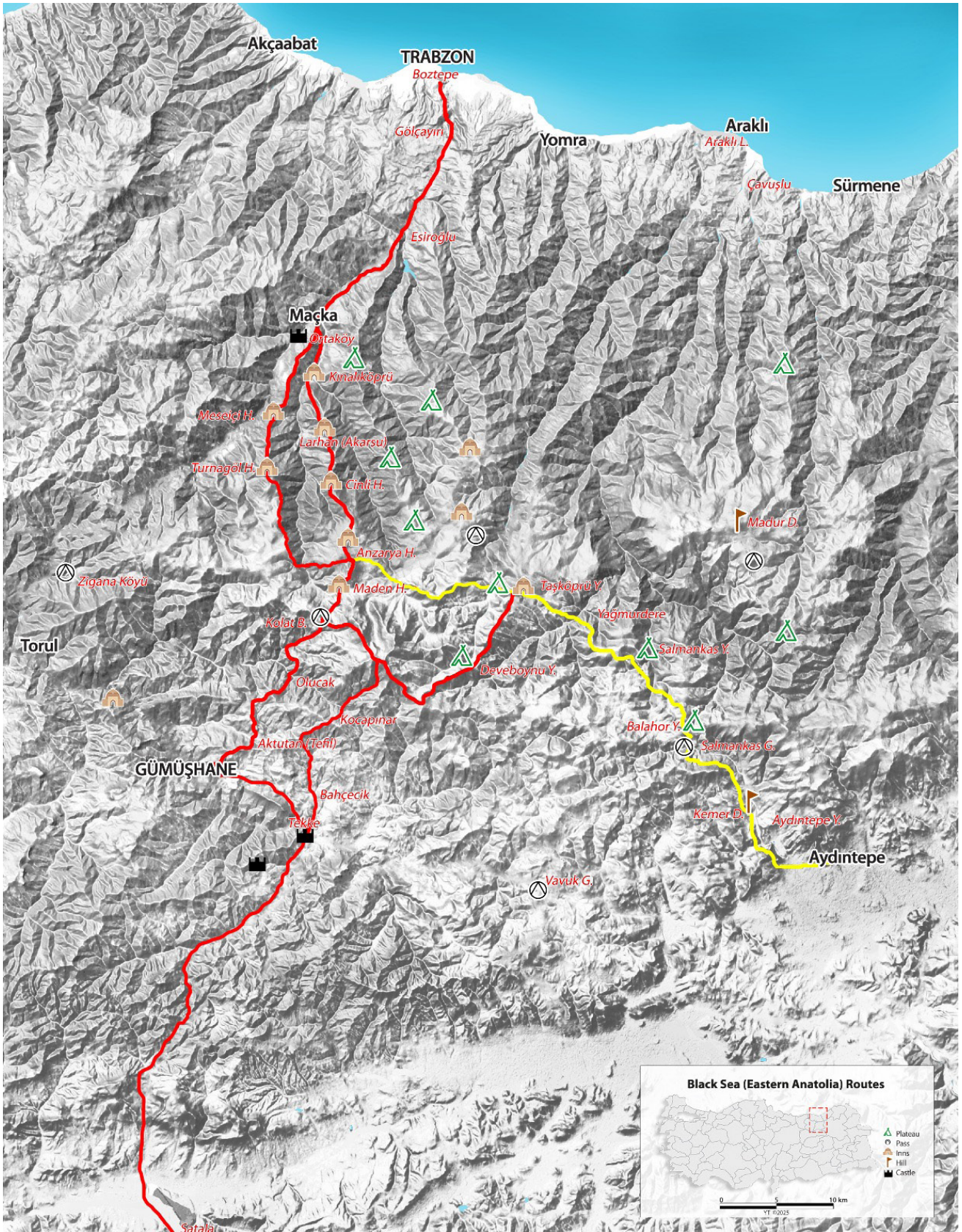
¹⁸ BRYER 1985, 52.

¹⁹ For a similar view, see MILLER 1916, 681; MITFORD 2018, 349.

²⁰ MITFORD 2000, 131.

²¹ MITFORD 2018, 349.

²² MILLER, 1916, 681; BRYER/WINFIELD 1985, 51-52; MITFORD 2000, 131; DOGANCI 2020, 143.



Map 1. A map showing the routes between Trapezus and Satala.

This route is consistent with the “Karakaban Road” route in 19th-century Ottoman sources and used by many local and foreign travelers.²³ Hamilton, who traveled from Trabzon to

Erzurum in the 1830s, reported reaching Karakaban Pass in 9 hours and 44 km on foot. After staying here for one night, he reached Gümüşhane in 1.5 days.²⁴ The English traveler

²³ EMIR/TOSUN/TOPALOĞLU/KOSE 2025, 485.

²⁴ HAMILTON 1842, 163-164.



Fig. 2. Kınalıköprü.

Southgate also reached Gümüşhane in 1837 by following the Karakaban Road and the Trabzon-Maçka-Meşeci Inns-Kolat Inns-Krom Valley route.²⁵ Southgate traveled between Trabzon and Gümüşhane in 23 hours. Otto van Blau, the Prussian consul in Trabzon, made similar statements in the same period, noting that the road took 24 hours for caravans.²⁶ 19th-century travelers Kinneir²⁷, Curtis²⁸, Weeks²⁹, and Taylor³⁰ also reported on this route.

The Trapezous-Satala Road, or Karakaban Road during the Ottoman period, appears to have been an important route connecting to the main lines of the ancient Silk Road until the last quarter of the 19th century. It is much shorter than the Old Zigana Road, although it is more difficult and bumpier. However, it is considered unsuitable for transportation except during summer. Although this road is challenging to cross, it is one of the essential summer roads in the Eastern Black Sea Region because it is short and safe.³¹

CURRENT ROUTE OF KARAKABAN ROAD

The Karakaban Road begins at Trabzon Port, as noted in Tabula Peutingeriana. It travels through Boztepe, located just above the modern Trabzon Port, and descends into the valley formed by the Değirmendere River, referred to

as “Pyxites” in ancient sources. This ancient route leads to modern Maçka. From Maçka, three distinct roads lead to Gümüşhane. These roads, separated by valleys, converge at Hanzarya Inns.

The first road is the “Larhan Road” (Map 1). It heads south from the Coşandere Valley in Maçka and reaches the “Kınalıköprü” (40°45’57” N 39°36’25” E). Dating from the 19th century, this single-span stone bridge is crucial (Fig. 2). “Kınalıköprü” was built during the Ottoman period to replace an older bridge that was destroyed. Since the old bridge was largely destroyed, it is impossible to determine the period it belongs to. After “Kınalıköprü”, the route leaves the Sumela Monastery Valley and heads southwest to Larhan (Akarsu) Village and then to Israfil (Cinli) Inns (40°36’01.8” N 39°37’02.6” E - 2150 m.). Israfil (Cinli) Inns, one of the oldest surviving inns in the region, was examined in detail by our team during the surveys conducted within the scope of the project (Fig. 3). Although the inn has survived to the present day, no traces of the old road were found. The route reaches Hanzarya Inns after Israfil Inns.³² The field surveys on the Larhan road from Maçka to Hanzarya Inns did not reveal any military structures such as fortresses or watchtowers, other than bridges and inns.

Today, the second route is known as the “Sumela Monastery Road”.³³ This route continues from Maçka as Yazlık (Livera) Village-Altındere Valley-Sumela-Camiboğazi-Hanzarya Inns (Map 1). A military structure (Yazlık Village Watchtower) dominating the valley at an altitude of approximately 600 m (40°79’381” N 39°62’29” E) was

²⁵ SOUTHGATE 1840, 157.

²⁶ BLAU 1858, 214-215.

²⁷ KINNEIR 1818, 343-348.

²⁸ CURTIS 1911, 46-47.

²⁹ WEEKS 1896, 2.

³⁰ TAYLOR 1868, 287-289.

³¹ BRYER/WINFIELD, 1985, 48-53; EMIR 2020, 2-3; ERUZ/ERBAŞ 2020, 38-39; KOSE 2016, 459.

³² BRYER/WINFIELD 1985, 48-49.

³³ KOSE 2012, 7-26; 2013, 19-40.



Fig. 3. Israfil (Cinli) Inns.



Fig. 4. Yazlık Village Watchtower.

identified on this road, which continues south from the western ridge of the Altındere Valley in the direction of Yazlık Village. The location of this structure indicates that this historical road was preserved. Its architectural structure, mortar walls, and masonry technique suggest it belongs to the post-medieval period (Fig. 4). It is known that

Yazlık (Livera) Village was the metropolitan center during the Ottoman Period, and the summer trade route near Sumela passed through here.³⁴ From the Yazlık Village, the Sumela Monastery can be reached along the mountain ridge

³⁴ KOSE 2013, 19 *et alii*.



Fig. 5. Taşköprü.

from the slopes of the Altındere Valley. Approximately 2 km south of the Sumela Monastery, the historical stone bridge with mortar and arches that gives the plateau its name is reached at Taşköprü (40°60'0168" N 39°79'0475" E - 1620 m, Fig. 5). The fact that this road leads directly to the Sumela Monastery and then connects with the old roads to Bayburt

and Gümüşhane shows that it is an important route. The route continues south from Taşköprü, first to *Camiboğazi* and then to *Hanzarya Inns*.

The third route is associated with the Trapezous-Satala road in Tabula Peutingeriana (Map 1). This route leads from Maçka to Ortaköy (Hortokop), which has the remains of an

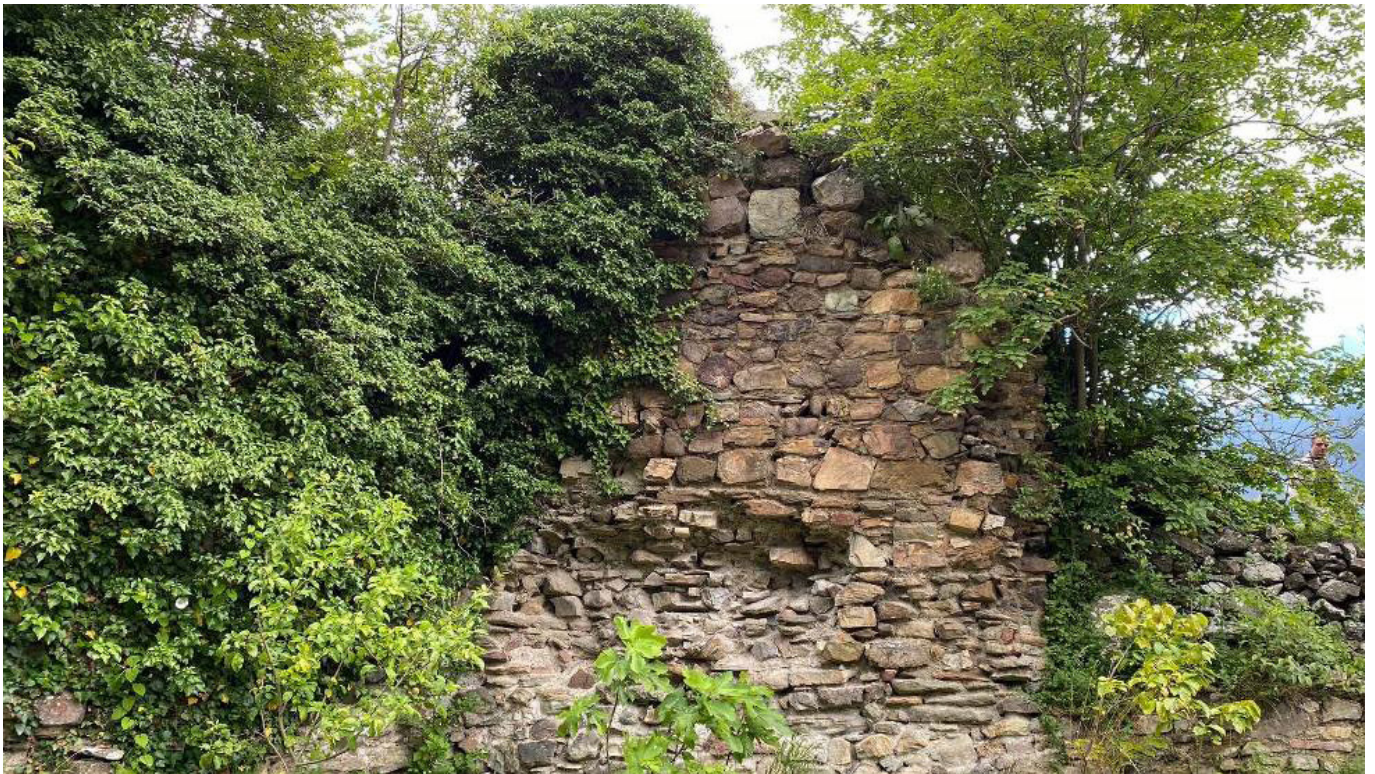


Fig. 6. Hortokop Castle.



Fig. 7. The old road of the Meşeici (Crow/Bryer 1997: 288, fig. 7)

old castle (Fig. 6). Hortokop Castle is located 700 m above sea level at a point dominating the valley and 360 m above the Maçka district center. The 60 m circular castle belongs to the group of bell-type castles of the reigns of Valentinian I (364-375 AD) and Valens (364-375 AD).³⁵ Although it is considered a Genoese fort, it is likely identical to *Mangana*, the first station in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*.³⁶ The correspondence with the distance between Trapezous and Mangana (20 milia passum, ca. 30 km) and the fact that it was a historical road route supports the Mangana-Hortokop match. The fortress controls the region's Ottoman "Kırlıklilise Inns" and Şakırağa Inns and the historical road.

After Ortaköy, Karakaban Road diverges from the main (Itinerarium Antonini route) and continues southeast towards *Meşeici Inns* (Map 1). Crow and Bryer³⁷ identified old paved road traces near *Meşeici Inns*, one of the most crucial accommodation centers during the Ottoman period (Fig. 7). Although traces of this paved road can be seen until



Fig. 8. Meşeici and the current highway.

recently, it is believed that the pavement stones were buried or destroyed by the road widening works (Fig. 8).

After the *Meşeici Inns*, the *Karakaban Mountain Pass*, which gives this road its name, is reached. Kiepert's map also shows Karakaban for the location of *Gizenenica*. After Karakaban, the next point of interest is *the Hocamezarı* (Map 1). Ottoman sources state that the guards and guides on this road were located in the village called "Bekçiler" in Maçka or Hocamezarı. It is indicated in the sources that the duty of these guards was to ensure the safety of the travelers and to guide them.³⁸ This information shows that the road was active during the Ottoman period and that Hocamezarı was one of the essential stopping points. Mitford³⁹, states that *Gizenenica*, mentioned in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, should be Hocamezarı.

Karakaban Road reaches the area called "*Turnagöl*" after the Hocamezarı. Mitford⁴⁰, states that this road is a historical route and that Xenophon may have used this route



Fig. 9. Horhor Plain.

³⁵ CROW/BRYER 1997, 287; ÇALIŞKAN AKGUL *et alii*, 2022, 115.

³⁶ BRYER/WINFIELD 1985, 51-52; MITFORD 2000, 131.

³⁷ CROW/BRYER 1997, 288, fig. 7.

³⁸ PRIME MINISTRY OTTOMAN ARCHIVES, İrade Meclisi-i Vala, nr. 15347.

³⁹ MITFORD 2000, 131.

⁴⁰ MITFORD 2000, 129-130.

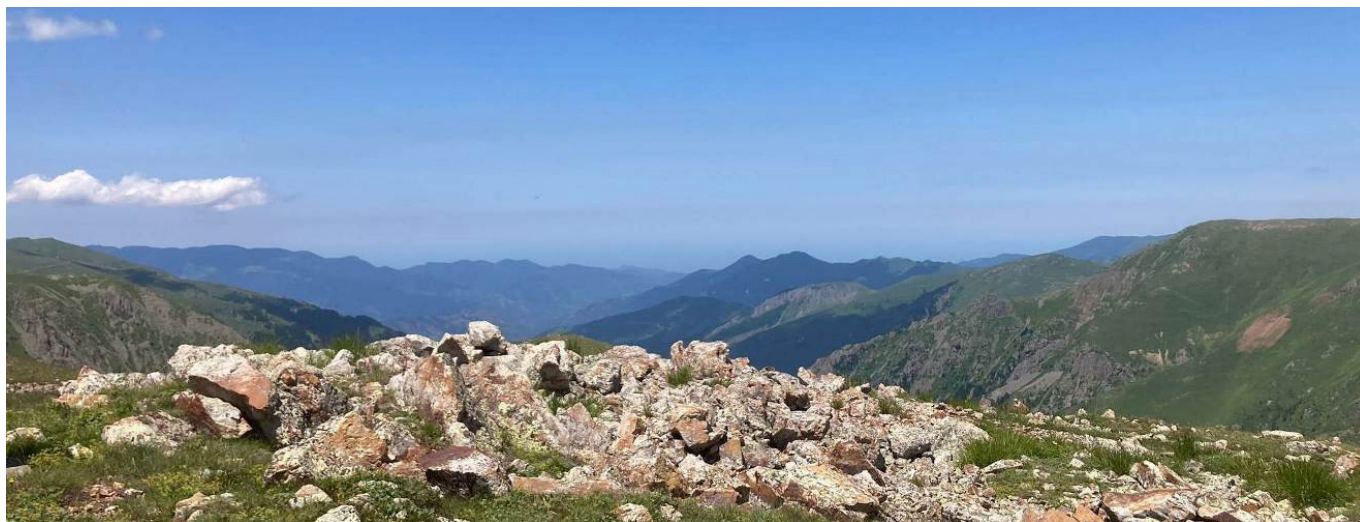


Fig. 10. Turnagöl (possible Theches Hill).

in 401 BC because the sea can be seen from the hills. He also suggests that Turnagöl is a good candidate for “*Theches Hill*”. There are many different views of Theches Hill. It is possible to list these views as follows: Bayburt/Vavuk Mountain⁴¹; Kop Mountain⁴², Deveboynu Mountains⁴³; Maçka/Iskobel Hill⁴⁴, Araklı/Polut⁴⁵. During our surveys, we found a hill 300 m east of Turnagöl in the area called *Horhor Plain*. This area, which has a vast and wide plain, is a place that could accommodate Xenophon and ten thousand soldiers with him (Fig. 9). From the northern end of this plain, the ridges of Boztepe and the sea beyond are easily visible (Fig. 10). Therefore, this location, which Mitford suggests could be a candidate for the Theches Hill mentioned in Xenophon, given its location, geographical structure, its location on an old road route, and the presence of a suitable hill overlooking the sea.

Milestones, which are frequently used in this geography, have been placed to follow the road, especially during the winter months, since the Ottoman Period. During our field surveys at an altitude of 2530 m between Turnagöl and *Kolat Pass*, about 500 m south of Turnagöl Plateau, such an old milestone was identified (Fig. 11). Traces of the old road route can also be followed from where the milestone was found.

Continuing southeast from Turnagöl, the road leads to *the Kolat Pass*, which Bryer⁴⁶ calls the “*Gates of Pontos*”. *Bylae*, one of the range points in *Tabula Peutingeriana*, is identified with the *Kolat Pass*.⁴⁷ Located at an altitude of approximately 2400 m, the *Kolat Pass* is seen as a gate providing access to Trabzon from the south. The pass is the common entry point of important summer routes to Maçka. After the *Kolat Pass*, the road divides into two main branches⁴⁸. The first route

leads to *Gümüşhane-Torul*, and the second route continues directly to Bayburt. The road to *Gümüşhane* is divided into different branches.⁴⁹

The first of these branches connects to the Old *Gümüşhane* road via *Hanzarya Inns-Maden Inns-Yitirmez (Leri)* and *Arzular* after the *Kolat Pass (Bylae)* (Map 1). Mitford suggested the route for the *Trapezous-Satala* road in *Tabula Peutingeriana*. Due to its location, *Hanzarya Inns* has been identified with the *Frigidarium* in *Tabula Peutingeriana*.⁵⁰ Indeed, the distance between the Inns of *Kolat* and *Hanzarya* is consistent with the distance between *Bylae-Frigidarium* in *Tabula*. However, while traces of the stone foundations of the old Inns could be seen in the area of *Hanzarya Inns*, which was a vital range point during the Ottoman period, until 2006, no remains have survived as a result of the road works carried out in the region in the following years (Fig. 12). At an altitude of 2,400 m, it is understood that *Hanzarya Inns* was the most prominent place where the historical roads descending from Trabzon to *Gümüşhane* converged. After the *Hanzarya Inns*, the road connects to *the Maden Inns*. Mitford identifies *Maden Inns* with *Patara*.⁵¹ The route then connects to *the village of Yitirmez (Leri)* and then to the *Murathanoğulları* site on the *Gümüşhane-Bayburt* road by *Arzular*. Mitford⁵² suggested *Yitirmez Village* for the current location of *Medocia* in *Tabula Peutingeriana* and *Murathanoğulları* for *Solonenica*. However, in a later study the author suggested the upper plateaus of *Agyarlar* or *Imera (Olucak)* for *Medocia* and *Leri* for *Solonenica*.⁵³

Mitford’s location suggestions for the *Tabula* route are, of course, not conclusive. Locations such as Mitford’s suggestion of *Maden Inns* for *Patara* should be discussed.

⁴¹ BRIOT/LYNCH 1870, 463.

⁴² AINSWORTH 1842, 127-153.

⁴³ PARADEISOPOULOS 2014, 234; ERUZ/ERBAŞ, 2020, 41.

⁴⁴ KARAGOZ, 1998, 137.

⁴⁵ BRENNAN/TUPLIN 2023, 129-149.

⁴⁶ BRYER 1985, 52.

⁴⁷ BRYER/WINFIELD 1985, 52; MITFORD 2000, 131; DOGANCI 2020, 143.

⁴⁸ After the *Kolat Inns*, a third route continues in the direction of *Aydıntepe-Bayburt*. This route continues as far as the *Kolat Inns*, while from the *Hanzarya Inns* and *Deveboynu* it connects south to *Sadak (Satala)*

or via the *Kostan Mountains* to the *Bayburt (Baiberdon?)-Aydıntepe (Hart/Khart)* road. BRYER/WINFIELD 1985, 48.

⁴⁹ For the route of the road to Bayburt, see. TOZER 1881, 426-450; LYNCH 1901, II, 240 dn.1; PARADEISOPOULOS 2015, 365-367.

⁵⁰ BRYER/WINFIELD 1985, 51-52; MITFORD 2000, 131; 2018, 349; DOGANCI 2020, 143.

⁵¹ MITFORD 2000, 131; 2018, 349; DOGANCI 2022, 143.

⁵² MITFORD 2000, 131.

⁵³ MITFORD 2018, 348-349.



Fig. 11. Kolat Pass and Turnagöl Road milestone.

In Tabula Peutingeriana, the distance between Frigidarium and Patara should be VIII milia passum (ca. 12 km). The distance between the Hanzarya Inns suggested by Mitford

for Frigidarium and the Maden Inns suggested by Mitford for Patara is about 2 km today. Although the old and current distances are incompatible, such a short distance does not



Fig. 12. Hanzarya Inns.



Fig. 13. *Krom Valley*

seem correct. Most modern researchers agree with the Hanzarya Inns suggestion for the Frigidarium. In *Tabula Peutingeriana*, the *Bylae-Frigidarium* distance appears to be *VI milia passum* (ca. 9 km). Moreover, in the Ottoman period, the neighborhood closest to the Hanzarya Inns is “Frangandon”. The Greeks living in the region may have changed the word *Frigidarium* to *Frangandon*. If we accept the *Frigidarium-Hanzarya* mapping as correct, another point should be identified for *Patara*. This should be a strategic area connecting *Hanzarya Inns* to *Gümüşhane*. *Dölek Pass*, southwest of the *Deveboynu Mountains*, would be a good candidate (Map 1). This is because there is a good route from *Dölek Pass* to *Murathanoğulları*. However, the *Patara-Dölek Pass* suggestion is incompatible with *Mitford’s Agyarlar* suggestion for *Medocia* after *Patara*. There is a much shorter distance between *Dölek Pass* and *Agyarlar*, about *XIII milia passum* (ca. 21 km).

Other alternative routes to *Satala* from *Hanzarya Inns* should be evaluated. Among these alternatives, according to Ottoman sources and field surveys, a path from *Hanzarya Inns* leads first to the *Krom Valley* and then to *Olucak (Imera) Village* (Map 1). *Olucak (Imera) Village* is also a good candidate for *Patara* in *Tabula Peutingeriana*. The distance between the *Hanzarya Inns* and *Olucak* (ca. 12 km) is consistent with the distance in *Tabula*. *Mitford*⁵⁴, also nominated the high plateaus of *Imera* for *Medocia*. The *Krom Valley* on this route is an important historical site with churches, bridges, and monasteries (Fig. 13).

This region is where *Trabzon* and *Gümüşhane* intersect, and many routes converge. In this region, the passage through the *Zigana (Kalkanlı)-Soğanlı Mountain range* is provided through *Camiboğazı*. Before and during the Ottoman period, it was a transit route for commercial routes with intensive mining activities, and despite its

high altitude, it was able to maintain its prosperity. *Olucak Village* owes its strategic and historical importance, among other factors, to its location on the old road route. Since the early 19th century, numerous religious and civil buildings with elaborate stone architectural quality have been built in the region (Fig. 14-15).⁵⁵

After *Olucak Village*, it reaches *Kocapınar (Kermut)* and then *Bahçeçik*. The route connects to the old *Gümüşhane* road via *Tekke* (Map 1). In *Tekke*, just above the old road route, there is an old settlement area in the form of a hill. At this settlement’s top is a castle structure with unmortared walls. Only a small part of the fortification wall survives today (Fig. 16). *Mitford*⁵⁶ compares the remains of the fortification wall to the *Justinian walls* at *Satala*. Like *Hortokop*, this fortress dominating the road on top of the old must have been built to protect the historical road route. A cistern about 8 m in size and 3 m in depth is also on the same hill (Fig. 17). Three other similar cisterns were found on this hill during the survey. Another remarkable historical relic on the mountain is a rock grave thought to belong to the *Classical Period*. It is also stated that a few inns belonging to the *Ottoman Period* are in this settlement area in *Tekke*. However, none of these inns have survived to the present day.

Tekke Castle is located at the midpoint of the *Zigana-Karakaban and Satala Road* (Map 1). This strategic location of *Tekke* undoubtedly attracted attention during the *Roman Period*. Another essential fortress structure is the *Kov Castle* on the *Kelkit road* leading to *Satala* from the south of *Tekke*. This fortress is located on a 130 m high rock 6 km north of the *Gümüşhane-Erzincan highway* (Fig. 18) and, based on its architecture, *Bryer*⁵⁷ suggested that it should be dated to the *Middle Ages*. *Çiğdem* and his team⁵⁸,

⁵⁴ MITFORD 2018, 349.

⁵⁵ ÖZKAN/YURTTAŞ 2012, 38-55.

⁵⁶ MITFORD 2018, 360.

⁵⁷ BRYER 1985, 310-313.

⁵⁸ ÇİĞDEM *et alii*, 2012, 70.



Fig. 14. *Imera Church*

who conducted official surveys in the region between 2000 and 2006, found abundant medieval and later ceramics

in the castle. Given its location and size, it is likely that this defensive structure is much older. Karakaban Road is



Fig. 15. *Imera Monastery*



Fig. 16. *Tekke Castle Wall*



Fig. 17. *Tekke Castle water cistern*

a strong candidate for the Trapezous-Satala route through the Tabula Peutingeriana. However, like Mitford, there may be errors in positioning other range points on this route. Therefore, it is still necessary not to make definitive conclusions about the Trapezous-Satala route at Tabula Peutingeriana. This suggests that more studies and data are needed for the future.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

It is seen that there are not many alternative main routes between Trabzon and Gümüşhane due to the region's surface forms, which consist of steep mountains and deep and steep valleys. For this reason, throughout history, transportation from Trabzon to the interior has been provided by routes that overlap or are close to each other. Thus, the road routes from



Fig. 18. Kov Castle

Trabzon to the interior have not changed much throughout history. Historical buildings, archaeological materials from different periods and civilizations on the known routes, and written sources supporting information about the region. However, the most significant difficulty in identifying these roads is that they are divided into many sub-branches, which are close to each other and even intersect at many points. In addition, the routes from Trabzon to Gümüşhane and Bayburt vary according to security and seasonal conditions. A significant part of these routes, which offer many alternatives, are separated from each other only by a valley. It is even seen that there are two different roads between the ridges of a mountain. For these reasons, it is tough to determine the current location of the Trapezous-Satala Road in Tabula Peutingeriana.

The Itinerarium Antonini and the Trapezous-Satala Road in the Tabula Peutingeriana have the same starting and ending points, although the ranges and distances differ. Accordingly, there are two different routes from Trapezous to Satala: summer and winter. The winter route seems safer but longer, while the summer route is shorter but more difficult. The main route connecting Trapezous to the interior, the winter road, is parallel to the Zigana Road. Zigana is included among the range points in the Itinerarium Antonini, which supports that this was the winter route. In this case, the road from Trapezous to Satala in Tabula Peutingeriana should be the summer route. However, the current location of this summer road is not precise. Since the road routes in the region have not changed much throughout history, the findings of our fieldwork between 2022 and 2024 on the summer road between Trabzon and Kayseri-Bayburt have been significant. According to our study, supported by 18th-19th century Ottoman sources and travelers' reports, the most common summer road between Trabzon and Kayseri is the "Karakaban Road". The fact that it is shorter than the winter route and has the same beginning and end makes it a good candidate for the Trapezous-Satala route. Indeed, many modern studies have also suggested Karakaban Road for the Trapezous-Satala route. There is no disagreement

in these studies about the current location of the route from Trapezous to Bylae. "Kolât Pass" was proposed for the current location of Bylae. However, after the Kolât Pass, the road offers many alternative routes. It has been determined that these routes are very close and that important historical buildings belong to different periods on each route. For this reason, it is seen that researchers had different opinions and even changed their route suggestions after the Kolât Pass. Another problem with positioning the Tabula Peutingeriana on the Trapezous-Satala road is the gradual disappearance of concrete evidence of the old route. The remains of the old road traces and the ruins of the inns in 2010 have completely disappeared today, as in the cases of Meşeiçi and Hanzarya Inns. Due to natural factors and human impact, much of the tangible evidence along the route has not survived.

As a result of our field studies supported by historical sources, the most suitable route suggestion for the Trapezous-Satala road in Tabula Peutingeriana can be listed as follows: *Trapezous-Maçka-Ortaköy (Hortokop)-Meşeiçi Inns-Hocamezarı-Kolât Pass-Hanzarya Inns-Krom Valley-Oluçak-Bahçeçik Tekke-Kov Castle-Köse-Sadak*

In the field surveys, critical historical buildings at the range points and the summer route commonly used by 18th—to 19th-century travelers strengthened this suggestion. Possible future scientific excavations, especially in Hortokop, Tekke, and Kov fortresses, could date the fortresses much further back. Thus, there will be more and more concrete evidence for identifying the Trapezous-Satala road in Tabula Peutingeriana with the Karakaban Road.

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