

Aquila's Roads: Connecting Paphlagonian Spaces

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Abstract: This study examines the socio-political landscape of the ancient city of Amastris (modern Amasra) through the lens of its road infrastructure, with a particular focus on the construction and significance of Aquila's roads. Situated in the challenging terrain of northern Anatolia's Küre Mountains, Amastris served as a vital maritime hub, linking diverse inland and coastal communities within Paphlagonia. Employing a multi-disciplinary approach that integrates ancient literary analysis, archaeological evidence, geospatial modeling, and modern photogrammetry, this paper reconstructs the network of primary and secondary Roman roads emanating from Amastris. The research highlights the dual role of these roads in fostering territorial coherence and enhancing regional connectivity, supporting both local autonomy and imperial governance. Key findings demonstrate that Aquila's roads were not merely infrastructural projects but strategic undertakings that blended private investment with public utility. These projects reflect the intricate interplay between individual agency and state interests in Roman provincial administration. Furthermore, the study explores the broader cultural and economic impacts of road construction on Amastris, illustrating how connectivity shaped civic identity, social integration, and territorial integrity. The paper concludes that Aquila's road-building initiatives were instrumental in sustaining Amastris's strategic significance and functionality within the Roman Empire. By examining the dynamic relationship between local and imperial priorities, this study offers insights into how infrastructure functioned as a nexus of governance, economic development, and regional integration in ancient Anatolia.

Type: Research Article

Received: 23.11.2024

Accepted: 23.12.2024

DOI: 10.37095/gephyra.1590099


Language: English

Keywords: Amastris; Paphlagonia; Roman roads; territorial coherence; Gaius Iulius Aquila.

Gephyra 29 (2025), 63-91

Amastris and its Territorium

The larger research question that this paper aims to explore is territorial coherence, viewed through the lens of road infrastructure. For the Roman empire, this was a fundamental aspect of governance and control—captured by the saying “all roads lead to Rome,” which symbolizes the interconnectedness of a coherent empire. While roads indeed appear ubiquitous on a large scale, as visualized in artifacts like the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, which shows provinces linked through extensive networks, this impression of connectivity becomes less pronounced when we examine regional levels on geo-rectified platforms, such as the *Omnes Viae* project or Stanford's Orbis project.¹ The limitations of connectivity at this scale are evident in resources like the *Barrington Atlas* or the *Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire*, in which major routes rarely meet the communities dotted in vast landscapes.² In the case of Amastris and its surrounding territory, this raises

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The research for this paper was generously funded by the Department of History at Peking University and the National Social Science Fund of China (21BSS043). I am deeply grateful to Dr. Hazar Kaba (Sinop Üniversitesi) for his support, and to Prof. Dr. Fatma Bağdatlı Çam (Bartın Üniversitesi) and Prof. Dr. Fatih Onur (Akdeniz Üniversitesi) for their invaluable guidance and advice. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 18th International Conference of the Taiwan Association of Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies on November 1, 2024, where I benefited greatly from the thoughtful questions and comments of the participants. All translations of ancient sources are by the author (unless otherwise stated).

¹ Omnes Viae, <https://omnesviae.org/> (accessed December 20, 2024); ORBIS, <https://orbis.stanford.edu> (accessed April 29, 2025).

² Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire, <https://imperium.ahlfeldt.se/> (accessed December 20, 2024).

questions about how the city maintained its coherence and functionality, given that a large portion of its habitable lands were separated by the imposing and rugged Küre Mountains.

Amastris was a polis in northern Anatolia founded by Lady Amastris, daughter of Oxyathres, brother of King Darius III, and later *despoina* of Herakleia Pontika.³ Lady Amastris played a significant role in northern Anatolian geopolitics from the late 4th to early 3rd century BCE, with a well-balanced approach that engaged with Hellenic, Macedonian, and Iranian traditions of power.⁴ Her polis, with its akropolis at Sesamos (modern Amasra), was perhaps one of the better-governed autonomous entities, remaining so well into the third century CE.⁵ Current interpretations of Strabo's *Geographika* suggest that Amastris may have undergone territorial changes, potentially expanding beyond its Hellenistic boundaries.⁶ If this expansion did occur, it would imply that the polis became larger and more territorially complex during this process.

Several perplexing questions arise with the increase in Amastris's size. We lack substantial evidence to determine the precise territorial extent of Amastris, even during the Roman period. Territorial indicators—such as literary descriptions, physical monuments, or boundary stones—are scarce.⁷ Consequently, reliance on ancient literary sources is essential, though these primarily depict Amastris as a port-of-call with good harbors and control over a network of coastal settlements.⁸ However, size alone does not necessarily dictate complexity, especially in Amastris's case. If we take Lucian's accounts as a reliable portrayal, Amastris' complexity can be attributed to its role as a significant maritime hub, a dot (or several dots) on the coast linking communities across northern and eastern Pontus with the Roman Aegean. Lucian's personal interest in relocating his family to Amastris may suggest that the city held particular appeal for communities in the upper Euphrates, especially during periods of tension with Parthia, such as during Lucius Verus's Parthian campaign.⁹ In other words, what Lucian's depictions offer are the maritime and long-distance dimensions to the degree of complexity Amastris may have had.

Beyond Lucian, epigraphic evidence and other physical remains (with along with some literary evidence) suggest that the increase in size, particularly into the interior of Paphlagonia, also may have led to increased complexity for the Amastrian *polis*.¹⁰ Marek's findings, for instance, suggest

³ Memnon *FGrHist* 434=Phot. *Bib.* 224.222b.9-239b.43, esp. Memnon *FGrHist* 434F40.3-4.; Burstein 1976, 72-85, for example, discussed Amastris' roles in the histories of Herakleia Pontika.

⁴ There are recently several interesting discussions on Amastris: van Oppen 2020, 17-37 focuses on the importance to recognize that Amastris was the first queen of the Hellenistic period; Bağdatlı Çam 2020, 100-102 offers a close study of Amastris' balanced approach to engage with the Hellenic and Iranian dimensions of her rulership through the eclectic symbols of Aphrodite Ourania and Anahita in her coinage.

⁵ For general contributions on Amastris' history and archaeology, see mainly Robert, *À travers l'Asie Mineure*, 147-176, Marek 1989, 373-389 and 1993, 88-100, but also Erciyas 2003, 1491-1425, Barat 2013, 157-159.

⁶ Marek 1993, 37-39. The key is Strabo's claim that Mithridatic holdings in northern Anatolia were divided among eleven cities: Strab. 12.3.1; 12.3.9.

⁷ For a miliarium measuring distance between Amastris as *caput viae* and hence an approximate minimum size of, see Mendel 1901, 32-34 (no. 177); also inscriptions specifically mentioning Amastris in the village of Meğre, Eflani: Marek 1993, 180 (Kat. Amastris no. 95).

⁸ Strab. 12.3.10; Plin. *ep.* 10.98; For Amastrian constituent *katoikiai*, Hom. *il.* 2.851-855; Ps.-Skylax *peripl.* 90; Apoll. Rhod. *arg.* 2.930-945.

⁹ Luc. *tox.* 57-58; Luc. *alex.* 25, 56. Jones 1986, 17-19.

¹⁰ Xen. *anab.* 5.6.1-10; Strab. 4.4.3, 5.1.4, 7.3.6, 12.3.4, 12.3.8, 12.3.21; see survey by Chiai 2019, 97-101 and also Barat 2013, 160-165 for literary sources.

a vertically and spatially diverse region, reflecting complex, divergent lifestyles between its coastal and interior populations (Fig. 1).¹¹ The Amastrian *polis* would have had a significant non-maritime, non-Hellenic constituency seldom discussed, apart from contributions by Christian Marek (1993; 2003), and to a lesser extent Robert Donceel (1984a), Thomas Corsten (2007), Ligia Ruscu (2017), and Gian Franco Chiai (2019). In other words, what we are discussing is first an intersect of the qualitative and quantitative aspects. The volume and intensity of engagements between Amastrian settlements would determine what sort of *polis* Amastris was. The nature of the settlements themselves would also be a crucial factor. The Amastrian *territorium* in the Principate stretched at least 80 km inland over the mountain ranges now called the Küre Dağları, to the borders of cities like Pompeiopolis¹² and Kaisareia-Proseilemmene/Hadrianopolis.¹³ It would be important to give a qualitative assessment of what Amastris was as a *polis* in the imperial period based on such connections. Since it was not just a port city, but an amalgamation of inland and coastal constituencies, integrative complexities embedded in the communities and individuals themselves must have been present. There is a need to be a fuller assessment of the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural dynamics in order to understand the *polis* Amastris in comprehensive terms.



Fig. 1) Digitized territory of Amastris based Marek (1993), with measurements for Amastris-Pınarbaşı (107 km), Amastris-Meğre (103 km), Kytoros-Meğre (108 km). Red diamond for findsites of Kaisareia-Proseilemmene inscriptions; Green diamond for findsites of Pompeiopolis inscriptions. Blue diamonds are the Amastrian "coastal-cluster" inscriptions; blue tags are Eflani-Pınarbaşı "inland-cluster" inscriptions. Red lines indicate modern pathways. White indicates possible paths of access and approximate distance to Meğre based on Google Earth Pro. Base image Google Earth 2024, Image Landsat/Copernicus; annotations by author

¹¹ Marek 1993, 37-39; see Chiai 2019, 111-119 for further discussion of Marek's inscriptions concerning the royal cult of Zeus Stratiotes of the Mithridatids in the Amastrian *polis* that continued into the Roman period, and an Anatolian, ethereal "Vegetationsgott" with -enos epithets found in the southeastern territories of Roman Amastris and further to Pompeiopolis Kaisareia-Hadrianopolis; also see Cumont 1901, 51-52 for his eye-witness account of rites of worship that he associated with those described in App. *Mithr.* 65.

¹² Marek 1993, 65-69.

¹³ Marek 1993, 100-102, 114-116.

Coherence

From the above, it becomes clear that a comprehensive understanding of the *polis* of Amastris hinges on the coherence of its diverse constituencies. As Donceel has shown, diversity is evident in various ritualistic norms and aesthetic expressions.¹⁴ Alongside this diversity, there exists a sense of commonality. Marek highlights affinities shared between Amastris 'coastal and inland settlements, such as the use of banquet scenes, Macedonian month names, and distinctive time-reckoning formulas.¹⁵ These customary and institutional affinities suggest a form of coherence that extends beyond occasional contact or artificial administrative integration. Unlike interactions that produce transient "haloes" of engagement with no enduring attachments, this coherence reflects a deeper, more intrinsic connectedness. This concept of connectedness closely aligns with Horden and Purcell's definition of connectivity: "the various ways in which microregions cohere, both internal and also one with another – in aggregates that may range in size from small clusters to something approaching the entire Mediterranean."¹⁶ Connectivity does not rely on direct, spatially mappable links; instead, Amastris may "cohere" with another microregion in "various ways." For example, amphora evidence indicates Amastrian connectivity with northern Pontus,¹⁷ and amphorae produced from Sinope, Colchis, northern Pontus, and Moesia are known to have passed through or ended up in Amastris.¹⁸ However, the precise nature of these interactions, engagements, and reciprocal influences remains unclear—and need not be clear to illustrate this form of connectedness. Similarly, inscriptions documenting personal interactions between Amastrians and foreign contexts follow this pattern, offering glimpses of connectivity without requiring detailed or direct links.¹⁹

¹⁴ Three dedications "to Zeus Koropizos" (Διὶ Κοροπιζῷ) and "to Zeus Gainios" (Διὶ Γαίνι[ος?]) inscribed upon bulls in a standing position, looking straight ahead, with the legs of the fore and hindquarters placed side by side, discussed by Marek 1993, 179-180 (Kat. Amastris no. 96); Donceel 1984a, 34; for short description and photo, see Marek 2003, 104-105, figs. 150-151; Summerer 2015, 200-201 fig. 13. Donceel (1984a, 25-26) points to Hittite and especially Urartian comparanda in terms of the shape and rendering of the eyes and nostrils, and parallels with the small bull's head-shaped attachments on either side under the outer edge of the Urartian cauldron from Cumae. Donceel further points to three reliefs depicting a woman setting in a niche her right hand holding a footless cup often seen in Syro-Hittite banquet scene reliefs, with provenance from villages between Eflani and Daday (Karlı and Çiğlene/Selalmaz), Donceel 1984a, 44-47.

¹⁵ Among these evidence, a dedicatory inscription set up by Marcus Aurelius Alexander at Meğre, southeast of modern Eflani, is most critical. The dedicatory inscription used a local time-reckoning formula, stating that the inscription was set up in the year 279 of the local era. The dedicant declared himself as the *protos archon* of Amastris, which makes the local era most likely Amastrian, with an epoch of 70 BCE (hence 209 CE). Marek 1993, 66-67, 129-131; 183 (Kat. Amastris 102, Hyperberetaios); 184 (Kat. Amastris 105, Gorpiaios).

¹⁶ Horden – Purcell 2000, 123.

¹⁷ Tezgor 2020, 82-83.

¹⁸ Ščeglov 1986, 370 fig. 2; Stolba 2003, 279-280; Tezgor 2020, 82-83, 115-116.

¹⁹ Amastrian ship captain Athenion, son of Praxiteles, who received proper burial from an association of merchants and sailors (δοῦμος Ἀφροδίτης Ἐπιτευξιδίας) in Thessalonike, *PPEE* 155 = *SEG* 42.625; athletes on the agonistic circuit, *PPEE* 153 = *AE* 1969/70, 587 (Corinth); 154 ter = *I.Ephesos* 1117 (Ephesos); 215 = Marek Kat. Amastris 44 (Heraclea Pontica); Amastrian sophists in Athens, *PPEE* 149 = Phil. VS 2.11; *nomikos* in Hadrianopolis, *PPEE* 218-219 = Marek Kat Kaisareia Hadrianopolis 29; a *nomikos* synkathedros of the provincial governor Marcus Ulpius Arabianus at Sicca Veneria in Africa proconsularis, *PPEE* 206 = *CIL* VIII 1640; Ambassadors in Panticapaeum, *PPEE* 178-179, 185-187 = *CIRB* 54; proxenoi honored at Chersonesus Taurica; *PPEE* 172 = *IOSPE* I² 381, *PPEE* 174 = *IOSPE* I² 358; musikos, *PPEE* 157 = *EKM I Beroia* 396, Athens *PPEE* 152 = *IG* II² 13135; veterans, Viminacium (Moesia): *PPEE* 158 = *IMS* II 53.b.89; *PPEE* 159 = *IMS* II

Inscriptions with Amastrian characteristics found in the southern ranges of the Küre Mountains can also be included in this category.²⁰ A reasonable assumption is that there was mobility between the coastal centers and the territories beyond the Küre Mountains, even if the precise identification of roads remains a secondary concern. Klaus Belke, for instance, described the connections between Amastrian coastal and inland territories in this manner:²¹

Route B 4: Amastris-Safranbolu-Adrianupolis-Potomia Cepora

Die Route B 4 verband zunächst Amastris mit den binnenländischen Teilen seines Stadtterritoriums, das sich im Osten bis in die Gegend von Azdavay und zum Zeus-Tempel von → Bonita erstreckte²², und vernetzte weiters die Routen A 3, A 2 und A 1. Sie fiel sicherlich bis Bartın mit der Küstenstraße (Route A 3) zusammen und folgte dann dem Parthenios (Koca Irmak, im Oberlauf Ova Cayı) flussaufwärts, vorbei an der mittelalterlichen Burg von → Derbent, bis zum Ort Ovacuma. Ein Ast führte nun vermutlich direkt über Eflâni zum Tempel des Zeus Bonitēnos (→ Bonita) und somit auf die nördliche Variante der Route A 2. Der andere Zweig bog wohl wie die moderne Straße bei Ovacuma nach süden ab und führte über den 1580 m hohen Ahmetusta Geçidi ins Becken von Safranbolu und Karabük, wo - durch das Tal des Araç Çayı - auch die südliche Variante der Route A 2 abzweigte. Die Nord-Süd-Verbindung verlief nun ein Stück entlang des Billaïos talaufwärts, bog aber dann in das Tal des Viransehir Çayı ab (zu Beginn durch das enge Kilise Boğazi), dem sie bis Adrianupolis folgte. Nun mußte ein kurzer, aber steiler Aufstieg zur Hochfläche des Oberlaufes des Billaïos überwunden werden, um den Anschluß an die Route A 1 bei → Potomia Cepora zu erreichen²³.

The language used here serves both to reassure and to highlight the uncertainties surrounding the connection between Amastris and Bonita, an ancient settlement mentioned in a third-century CE inscription as lying on Amastris' southeastern borderlands. "Route" is therefore an accurate description, as the type of artificially constructed roads we are accustomed to—such as *glareata* (gravelled) or *munita* (protected) roads, paved with either squared stone blocks (*lapide quadrato strata*) or silicate materials like tuff or basalt (*silice strata*)—may not have been laid in this region.²² Instead, most traffic between Amastrian spaces likely relied on leveled and "trodden" earthen pathways.²³ These may have resembled the roads described by Xenophon, which in some sections

53.a.13; Răhău/Apulum (Dacia): *PPEE* 159 = *CIL* III 971; Troesmis (Moesia Inferior) 162-167; Rome *PPEE* 195 = *CIL* VI 2385, Misenum *PPEE* 196 = *CIL* VI 32908 a.3; Puteoli *PPEE* 197, 199 = *CIL* X 3495; Aecae *PPEE* 200 = *CIL* IX 951; Verona *PPEE* 201-202 = *CIL* V 3467; Aquincum *PPEE* 203 = *AE* 2002.1207; Incertae, Athens *PPEE* 147 = *FRA* 430, *PPEE* 148 = *FRA* 431, *PPEE* 150 = *FRA* 432, *PPEE* 151 = *FRA* 433; Smyrna *PPEE* 208 = *I.Smyrna* II2 Beilage XI 427; Thebais Egypt *PPEE* 220 = *I.Syringes* 1681, 221 = *I.Syringes* 1758.

²⁰ Marek 1993, 157-187, Kat. Amastris nos. 95-117; 196 Kat. Kaisareia Hadrianopolis 29.

²¹ Belke 1996, 133-134.

²² *Dig.* 43.11.1.1-3. e.g. Liv. 10.23.12 *semitamque saxo quadrato a Capena porta ad Martis strauerunt* [they also paved a path with square stones from the Capena Gate to the Temple of Mars]; Liv. 10.47.4 *uia a Martis silice ad Bouillas perstrata est* [a road was paved with silicate stones from the Temple of Mars to the Bovillae]; 38.28.3 *substructionem super Aequi melium in Capitolio et uiam silice sternendam a porta Capena ad Martis locauerunt* [they commissioned infrastructural work above the Aequimelum on the Capitoline and paved the road with silicate stones from the Capena gate to the Temple of Mars].

²³ *via terrena*, contrasted to stone-paved road: *Dig.* 43.11.1.2 ...*uel in uiam terrenam glaream ini<ce>re aut sternere uiam lapide quae terrena sit, uel contra lapide stratam terrenam facere*. [...to lay gravel on an earthen road or pave an earthen road with stone, or conversely, to cover a paved stone road with earth]; Knapton 2016, 18.

could become “swampy” and difficult to navigate, particularly for wagons.²⁴ Additionally, certain segments of routes *traversed* rugged terrain. Belke’s account identifies two such segments. One overlaps with a modern road traversing the Ahmetusta Pass (1580 m). Beyond this, a “short but steep ascent to the plateau of the upper Billaïos” (ein kurzer, aber steiler Aufstieg zur Hochfläche des Oberlaufes des Billaïos überwunden werden) was necessary to connect with Potomia Cepora.²⁵ Were these challenging segments navigated solely via natural pathways? If not, what types of artificially created pathways might have been employed, and what ancient methods could have mitigated adverse travel conditions? These considerations offer a framework for exploring how Amastrian connectivity was maintained across its rugged landscapes.

Recent archaeological research on Amastris, including digital data documentation and rescue excavations, has primarily focused on the immediate environs of modern Amasra, corresponding to ancient Sesamos proper.²⁶ One particularly noteworthy contribution is the 2019 field survey report by Bağdatlı Çam et al., which discusses not only architectural blocks and inscriptions discovered at Tekketepe and other sites but also traces of Roman-era roads associated with the so-called Kuşkayası monument.²⁷ The series of roads documented by Bağdatlı Çam et al. includes detailed information about their locations, state of preservation, satellite photo-based infographics, photographs, and geomorphological data. These resources provide crucial guidance for researchers investigating connectivity between the urban center of ancient Amastris and its surrounding hinterland, helping to devise strategies for further exploration and analysis.

Building on the reports by Bağdatlı Çam et al., as well as the earlier work of travelers and researchers like von Diest and Eyice, a constructive next step is to develop connectivity models of primary and secondary routes. Similar approaches have recently been applied by scholars studying other sites, offering a framework for analyzing ancient networks.²⁸ It may be of interest in the future to

²⁴ Xen. *an.* 1.5.7 καὶ δὴ ποτὲ στενοχωρίας καὶ πηλοῦ φανέντος ταῖς ἀμάξαις δυσπορεύτου ἐπέστη ὁ Κῦρος σὺν τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν ἀρίστοις καὶ εὐδαιμονεστάτοις καὶ ἔταξε Γλοῦν καὶ Πίγρητα λαβόντας τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ στρατοῦ συνεκβιβάζειν τὰς ἀμάξας. [and when once the route became narrow and swampy, making it difficult for the wagons to proceed, Kyros, accompanied by his most capable and wealthiest companions, ordered Glos and Pigres to assist the wagons with soldiers from the barbarian army.]

²⁵ Belke 1996, 134.

²⁶ For an overview on recent survey work carried out in the Amasra region, see Bağdatlı Çam et al. 2019, 190-207 and Bağdatlı Çam 2022, 13-16; for recent discussion of two funerary stelai from the village of Sipihler, in the interior of the Amastrian border shared with Hadrianopolis, potentially of Hellenistic date based on stylistic comparisons, see Sağlan 2022, 214-228, and ought to be compared with discussions by Christian Marek of two funerary stelai with verse inscriptions, Marek 1993, 100-116; for a recent survey of epigraphical studies on Amastrian materials, see Öztürk 2022, 177-182. Very few Hellenistic period finds have been reported during the archaeological surveys in Cide – Şenpazar, conducted between 2009-2011, Bakan – Şerifoğlu 2015, 298-302. For a late Hellenistic bronze attachment in the form of a child at the Amasra museum, see Patacı – Laflı 2015, 321. For a compilation of sites in the northern Anatolia (including Filyos Valley to Safranbolu, the Eskipazar Valley to the Çerkeş Valley) that have been surveyed in modern times, see Johnson 2010, 306-418.

²⁷ The Kuşkayası monument was first properly studied by Semavi Eyice 70 years ago, Eyice 1955, 109-112. Recent treatment includes Silvia 2021 and Wu 2018, 62-84.

²⁸ e.g., Judaea, Via Legio-Scythopolis: Isaac – Roll, 1982, 26-54, Fischer et al. 1996, 61-107 esp. 98-107 on secondary roads; Potenza Valley Survey project with calculated possible road corridors between towns in study area and two hour walk isochrones around towns in study area: Vermeuleun – Mlekuz 2012, 207-222; Patavium: Matteazzi 2017, 83-100; Venice: Matteazzi 2020, 199-208; Northern Italy: Matteazzi 2023, 167-194; Dacia: Fodorean 2023, 271-283; Sarmizegetusa Regia GIS: Oltean – Fonte 2023: 305-315; Balkans and secondary

carry out GIS-oriented mobility studies (e.g. least-cost, viewshed, isochrones etc.) and then field-check through walking and other methods.²⁹ What this paper aims to contribute is revisit some of the descriptions and visualizations by earlier travellers mentioned above by making use of new documentation carried out by this author in 2023. The 2023 efforts involved using geo-tagged photography to document stretches of ancient Roman roads previously discussed by Bağdatlı Çam et al.³⁰ This author found that the geo-tagged photos can yield insight on the Roman road network connecting Amastris with its immediate hinterland when paired with earlier work by von Diest, Kalinka, Eyice, and Marek.³¹ A number of contributions on roads in Asia Minor can be consulted, including Belke's works as well as David French,³² and the recent two-volume catalogue by Takeko Harada and Fatih Cimok (2008). In particular, the number of places and types of roads and pathways illustrated in Harada and Cimok's volume is extraordinary, and could use a more robust introduction than what it currently has, as well as typological and comparative approaches to fully utilize the trove of visual data it has assembled. A case in point is the section of road that is the focus of this study, which we will now turn to.

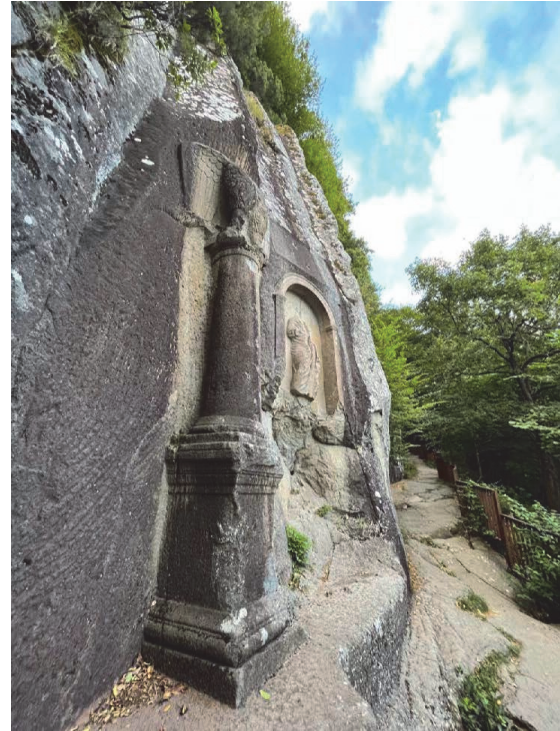


Fig. 2) The Kuş kayası Yol Anıtı monument. Photo taken by author, used with permission from Professor Bağdatlı Çam

Aquila's Roads

Visitors to the modern town of Amasra would come across the access stairway to the Roman remains of the so-called 'Kuşkayası' (Bird-Rock) roadside monument as they take the modern highway along the mountains encircling the harbor-town (Fig. 2). For our purposes, we call these the Aquila Monuments, based on inscriptions found among the sculptures, which inform us that they were commissioned by one Gaius Iulius Aquila. This person was "permanent High Priest of Divus Augustus" (perpetuus Sacerdos Divi Augusti), who cut through the mountains and paved the road that lies between modern Amasra and Bartın.³³

roads for transporting raw materials: Petrović 2019, 252-271; Roman road infrastructure density: Dalgaard et al. 2021, 896-916.

²⁹ Bowes 2021, 150-153.

³⁰ See an early discussion by Bekker-Nielsen 2000, 2-5 on extrapolating routes from horizontal planes using GPS equipment to locate routes.

³¹ Professor Bağdatlı Çam has kindly given consent for the publication of the photographs in this paper. I am also grateful for her guidance in support of my research.

³² e.g. roads in northern Asia Minor French 2013, 13; milestones in Bithynia and Pontus, French 2013, 26-72.

³³ A recent discussion of the monument and the associated inscriptions can be found in this author's open-access dissertation, and a recent reappraisal, see Wu 2018 and Silvia 2021.

The Aquila Monuments have been studied earlier by von Diest and Eyice.³⁴ A number of other contributions focused primarily on reporting the sculpture group and the associated inscriptions (which we will discuss, Fig. 3).³⁵ We also note that while Harada and Cimok photographed the road, they did not discuss specific traits of the road nor its relationship with other routes in the area.³⁶ As we take particular interest in the road itself and how it associates with other roads in the area, we will now review what von Diest and Eyice have offered, and build our work from there.

Von Diest offers good assessments of roads that are particularly interesting for our purposes, and we will introduce his observations here. Von Diest travelled to Amasra from Tsharshembe (modern Çaycuma) northeast and arrived at Bartın two days later.³⁷ Between the Billaos/Filyos and the Parthenios/Bartın there was rugged terrain, but travellers could make use of the many river valleys that wove the landscape together. In this regard it is important to note that von Diest recorded good travel conditions, such as the *guter Weg* leading from Hatib-Oglu-köi (modern Hatipoğlu) to Kille (modern Sazköy) and the rafts that transported logs downstream.³⁸

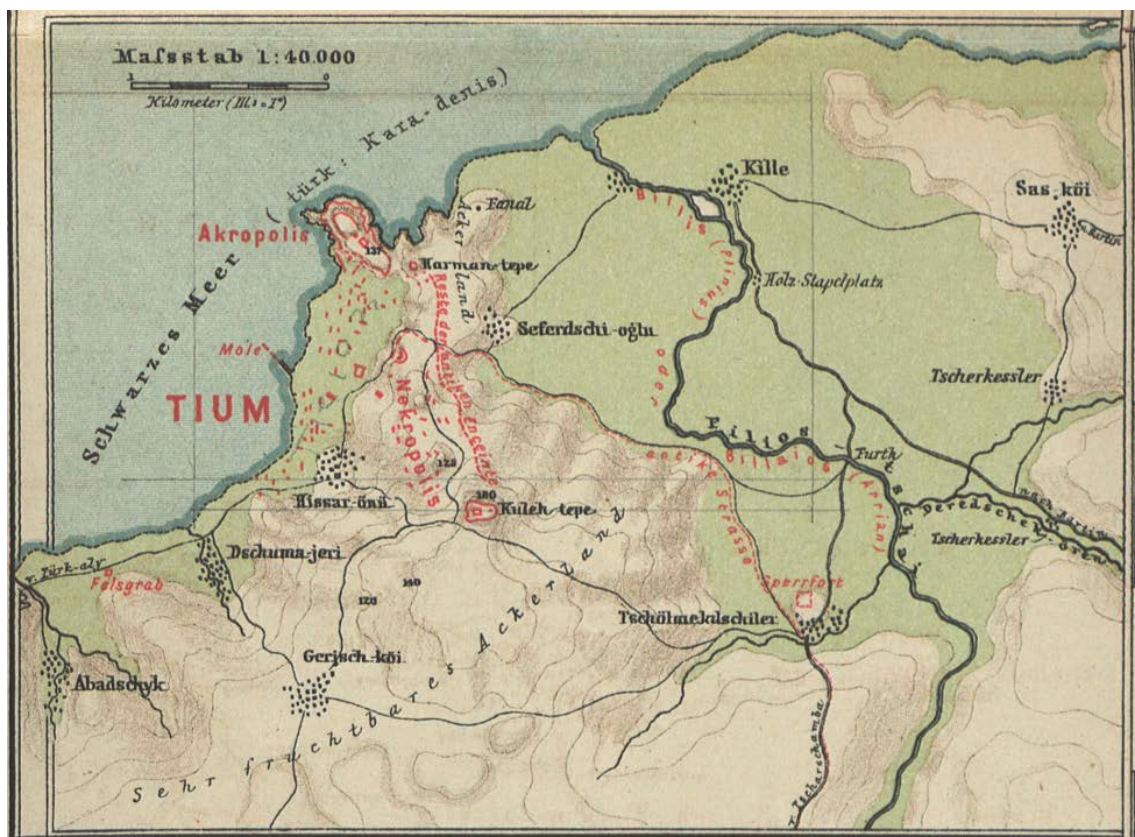


Fig. 3) Von Diest, von Pergamon über den Dindymos zum Pontus, Blatt II Itinerare in Phrygien und Bithynien 1889. Digitale Bibliothek Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

³⁴ Von Diest 1889; Eyice 1955.

³⁵ *CIL* III Suppl. 1902 Nr. 6983; *ILS* II. 1 5883; Kalinka 1933, 64; also see the scholarship review in Eyice 1955, 109-110.

³⁶ Harada – Cimok 2008, 2.196-197.

³⁷ Von Diest 1889, 65-67.

³⁸ Von Diest 1889, 67.

Von Diest also noted these observations in his maps (Fig. 4). We learn of remnants of old paving stones (alten Pflasters) in the vicinity of the Kara-tschai, before reaching the remains of the “interesting remains of a Roman road” (interessanten Reste der Römerstraße) associated with the Aquila Monument.³⁹ From the Aquila Monuments to Amasra, von Diest again reported that the new Safranbolu-Bartın-Amasra road being built at the time also revealed massive stone blocks that were remnants of Roman construction, and a number of sarcophagi as travellers approached Amasra from the southwest ridge. There was also a striking monument that he described as the “mausoleum of C. Servilius Rufus,” and five other similar buildings, all unfortunately looted.⁴⁰ Again, we benefit from a well-presented map of Amastris and environs, showing both settlements and ancient routes that connected Amasra by passages through what von Diest calls “the watershed range between the Black Sea and the Parthenios [Bartın River].”

The overall impression from von Diest, then, is that the route between Amastris and Bartın must have been invested with a Roman road readily recognizable by scholars of antiquity. Also, because the Roman road provided good guidance for the construction of modern roads, there is good reason to believe that the modern routes seen in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries can serve as proxy data for where Roman roads would have been built, at least in the Amastris-Bartın corridor (Fig. 5). Considering the prohibitive geography and the inviting river valleys leading towards Safranbolu, it is perhaps also reasonable to believe that Roman period connectivity naturally relied on such features of natural convenience.

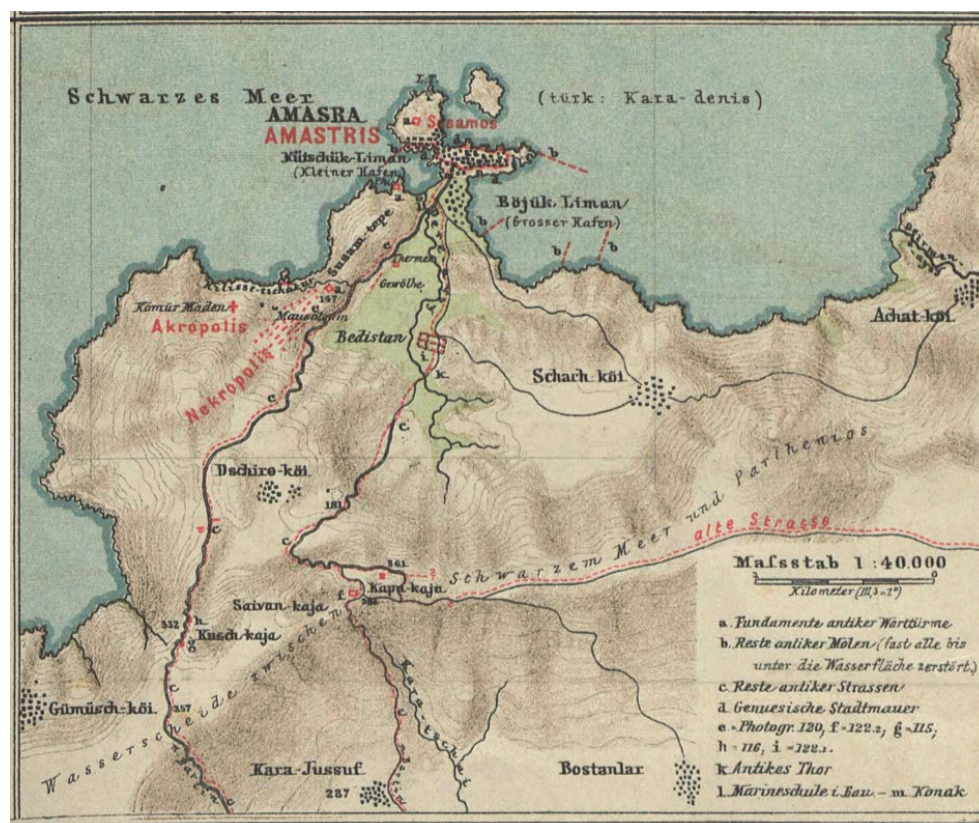


Fig. 4) Von Diest, *Von Pergamon über den Dindymos zum Pontus*, Blatt II *Itinere in Phrygien und Bithynien* 1889. Digitale Bibliothek Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

³⁹ Von Diest 1889, 68.

⁴⁰ Von Diest 1889, 68-69.



Fig. 5) Route taken by von Diest between October 20 and October 24, 1886, mapped onto Richard Kiepert's Karte von Kleinasien, Kiepert 1902-1906, AIII Zafaranboli for clarity

Turning to Eyice, we see an attempt at a scientific description of the monument and the associated roads. First to note is that Eyice described the sculpture group as located on the northern side of the coastal mountain range with a view towards the Black Sea. For the reader, Eyice also provided a diagram of the sculpture group, along with measurements of the width of the road (Fig. 6). These are helpful, but the diagram lacks a compass, and one could only rely on a general sense of direction to understand its bearings. We are now in a better position to say clearly that the sculpture group is facing west, with the roads running north-south along between Amasra and Bartın.

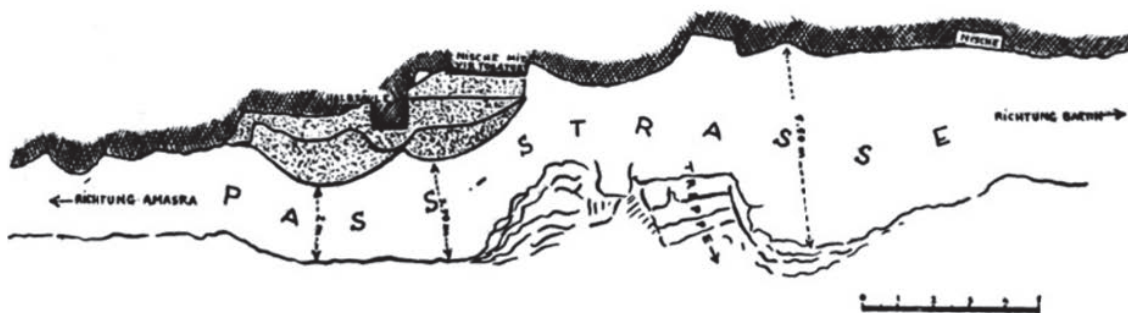


Abb. 1.

6) Diagram of the Pass-Strasse, Eyice 1955, 111

Of particular interest for us are Eyice's observations concerning rock-cut features that were not part of the sculptural program, but rather part of the road. The first are the "transverse grooves" (transversalen Rillen) on the road surface to the south of the Aquila Monuments (Fig. 7). Eyice mentioned in passing that such grooves are "typical"/üblichen. Perhaps it is the case, but examples

are not apparently abundant. The one example I have found is discussed by Matteazzi. A stretch of road between Eporedia (Ivrea) to Augusta Praetoria (Aosta) (Fig. 8) has a roadway carved out of bedrock that had transverse grooves “intended to aid animals in their ascent, providing greater grip for their hooves, and preventing unfortunate, risky slips.”⁴¹ But this stretch of road from Eporedia to Augusta Praetoria had parallel ruts that are not transverse to the road. These ruts are more likely the lengthwise *orbita*, deliberately sunk into the stone pavings on Roman roads for wheeled traffic.⁴² The pass at the Aquila Monuments does not show any indication of parallel ruts being sunk for such purpose, not the bedrock south of the Aquila Monuments towards Bartin nor the paved stones closer to the sculpture group and on the way to Amasra. Either the pass here was designed without wheeled traffic in mind, or the designers did not have the sophistication in accommodating wagons and means of transportation of the same sort.



Fig. 7) Transverse grooves. Photos taken by author, used with permission from Professor F. Bağdatlı Çam



Fig. 8) Strada romana delle Gallie, Donnas, Val d'Aosta. <https://www.bimbeinviaggio.com/en/italy/valle-d-aosta-en/most-beautiful-villages-towns-aosta-valley/> (accessed December 20, 2024)

⁴¹ Matteazzi 2023, 184.

⁴² Plin. 8.58; Weiss 2006, 252-255.

Another notable feature of the roadwork associated with the Aquila Monuments is its comparability to other sloped roads built using different techniques (Fig. 9). Eyice did not mention this, but it is of interest to us for reasons of agency and ancient road construction methodologies. The stretch of sloped road leading from Bartın northward to Amasra was first constructed with descending steps. After that, it continues with transverse grooves along the slope, then reaches a large niche carved into the bedrock, before leveling and transitioning to a stretch of relatively smooth surface without grooves, likely a combination of bedrock, followed by well-fitted stone pavings further north towards the sculptural ensemble (Fig. 10). We note that the various transitions did not receive attention in previous studies, including the recent catalogue by Harada and Cimok. They did provide a shot of the descending steps, in addition to the cut platform area just beneath the niched figure, but their brief comments mentioned only the inscriptions and the *vir togatus*, not the road.⁴³



Fig. 9) Roman rock-cut road using the stepped technique at the stretch south of the Aquila Monuments. Photo by author, used with permission from Professor F. Bağdatlı Çam

This transition from one technique to another is comparable with examples at the very least from published studies of ancient Roman roadways connecting transalpine locales (Fig. 12). A stretch of road at Fortezza (Bolzano), between Tridentum (Trento) to Augusta Vindelicium (Augsburg), for instance, paved steeper sections with smooth stones of different sizes. Level sections were surfaced with gravel using simple metalling, and in some places, the builders made use of the natural bedrock.⁴⁴ We also add the stretch of rock-cut, parallel-grooved Strada romana delle Gallie at

⁴³ Harada – Cimok 2008, 196: “Rock-cut road and monument of Kuskayasi (=bird’s rock), near Amastris (Amasra). It shows a man who is thought to represent Gaius Julius Aquilla, procurator of Pontus-Bithynia, who built the road at the time of the Emperor Claudius (AD 41-54). The column on one side carries an eagle with open wings, symbol of Roman legions. Both reliefs may have been damaged in antiquity by treasure hunters. The site has two inscriptions in Greek and Latin, one above the figure, the other somewhat separated from it.”

⁴⁴ Matteazzi 2023, 178.

Donnas in the Val d'Aosta in northwestern Italy, running alongside the Dora Baltea River mentioned earlier. One can see stone pavings patching up stretches of the road where bedrock was utilized, with the *orbis* well noticeable close to the modern road.



Fig. 10) Roman rock-cut road using different techniques at the stretch south of the Aquila Monuments. Photo taken by author, used with permission from Prof. F. Bağdathlı Çam



Fig. 11) Roman rock-cut road using different techniques at the stretch south of the Aquila Monuments. Photo taken by author, used with permission from Prof. F. Bağdathlı Çam



Figure 13. The road from *Tridentum* (Trento) to *Augusta Vindelicium* (Augsburg) at Fortezza (from De Bon 1938).

Fig. 12) Matteazzi 2023, 179 fig. 13

While the techniques themselves may be different, the ensemble approach towards the mitigation of risks associated with slopes and the reduction of energy expenditure along mountain passes appears to be comparable. In some respects the conceptual similarities are not surprising. We know, based on the inscribed *tabulae ansatae* associated with the roads and the sculptural program here, that it was a Roman equestrian and once *praefectus fabrum* who built the road at his own expense. Yet, there has been no previous attempt to look for comparanda, and questions concerning agency remain open. The Italian examples help not just to conceptualize the same ensemble approach to road construction but also of the same sort of professional construction teams at work. The Roman military establishment would be a good candidate, and it is again not surprising, given Aquila's background as *praefectus fabrum*. However, additional data points reported by Bağdatlı Çam et al. complicate the purely military explanation.

Bağdatlı Çam et al. reported indications that, at 300 meters north of Aquila Monuments, there was a stone quarry, with masons' marks still visible (Fig. 13). The presence of a stone quarry here is of considerable importance, even though we are unsure of the chronological relationship with the complicated roadwork leading from Bartın to Amasra. If the stone quarry preceded the construction of this road, then the stone cutters of the quarry would have made natural candidates for road construction work at this narrow passage. Furthermore, it is reasonable to ask whether the pass was originally intended for something other than normal wagon or foot traffic, but part of a quarry site converted into a passageway for the transportation of stone materials.



Fig. 13) Bağdatlı Çam et al. 2019, 204 fig. 27, "Ancient stone quarry and a monogram." Note the deep chisel marks and the nu shaped inscription underneath in the image to the right

The feature noted by Eyice was left out of Bağdatlı Çam et al.'s report, but this omission could potentially be explained alongside the stone quarry, which Bağdatlı Çam et al. identified convincingly through cuttings and masons' marks. Eyice noticed a flight of stairs leading up to the rock-cut road (figs. 14 and 15). He surmised that it may have been part of the route connecting the town of Tarlaağzı, a town that sits immediately on the coastline southwest of Amasra. This is an interesting suggestion that has not been discussed in full in later scholarship, and has immediate relevance to the question of secondary road networks.

If Eyice's suggestion is indeed correct, then settlements across the Amastrian landscape might have tried to create pathways that linked to critical infrastructure, such as a mountain pass that leads to the capital of the Amastrian *polis*. It could supplement von Diest's map that documented ancient roads lining the rugged terrain south of Amasra, along with the settlements nearby. The attraction of such an interpretation lies in the truism that secondary roads were just as necessary as the primary well-paved roadways. As our project was to understand how the roads associated

with the Aquila Monuments contributed to general connectivity of the region, Eyice's interpretation works very well in our favor. That said, further investigations would be necessary to confirm that this flight of stairs indeed contributed to settlement connectivity.



Fig. 14) S. Eyice's "Treppe," geotagged photos taken by author, used with permission from Professor F. Bağdatlı Çam

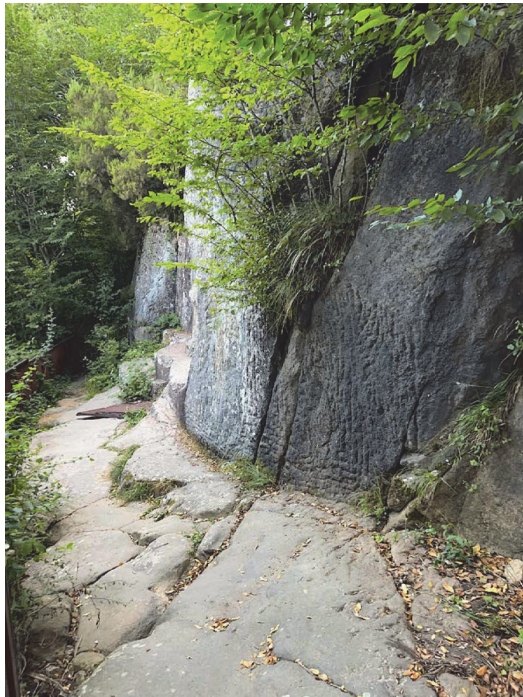


Fig. 15) Photo of the section where the flight of stairs (left) is located. Current view blocked by modern intervention and foliage. photo taken by author, used with permission from Professor F. Bağdatlı Çam

One preliminary test is remote sensing. The use of high resolution RGB Landsat imagery may lead to successful identifications of artificially generated features in the form of anomalies (e.g. crop or soil marks), particularly when given the right season and additional adjustments in tonal differences.⁴⁵ There are also cases in which anomalies were not artificially constructed features but still anthropogenic, such as "relict paths" or traces of ancient roads "organically formed by the continual passage of people and animal along the same route over time."⁴⁶ High resolution satellite imagery would require an investment, and at this point cost-effective measures are more preferable. Google Earth Pro provides a selection of seasonally distinct satellite imagery for the same location showing both the geotagged site of the flight of stairs and the surrounding landscape (Fig. 16). A mosaic presentation of these images is given here in order to test whether anomalies of potentially anthropogenic or artificial features can be identified. There appears to be contours of a trail leading

⁴⁵ e.g. case studies in Egypt, Parcak 2007, 70-72; Kaimaris *et al.* 2012, 13-17.

⁴⁶ Hritz 2014, 238-239.

a countryside road leading northwest to Tarlaağzı and other settlements. Whether this pathway can be considered a Roman or at least an ancient pathway would require additional field survey work. While no definitive answers can be given, the results of the preliminary exploration suggest that the roadway associated with the Aquila Monuments served perhaps as an ancient intersection of local and more regional channels of connectivity in the rugged Amastrian territory.

Additional support may be found for routes developing along Aquila's road. As reported by Bağdatlı Çam et al., there are additional rock-cut spaces farther north of the Aquila Monuments and the stone quarry that they identified. I reached this stretch of road and took geo-tagged photographs. These rock-cut spaces form an east-west vector perpendicular to the north-south road passing by the Aquila monuments (Fig. 17).

What is interesting is how the geotagged vectors compare with routes recorded by von Diest (Fig. 18). In von Diest's rendering, there were two north-south routes leading to Amastris. He did not report ancient roads with an east-west vector. The presence of this east-west route would then be associated with the space just south of the settlement von Diest marked as Dschire-Köi. This route, with several hallmarks of a *via strata et munita* (i.e., a properly surfaced and "fortified" road), also happens to bear implications of connecting two apparently "main" north-south routes connecting Amasra with settlements beyond the watershed hills. There seems to be good reason to believe that this transverse route adds to the question about the evolving of secondary routes in the Amastrian *territorium*. How best to evaluate the relationship between it and the quarry, Aquila's monuments, and various technical elements of Aquila's road, would require further consideration.

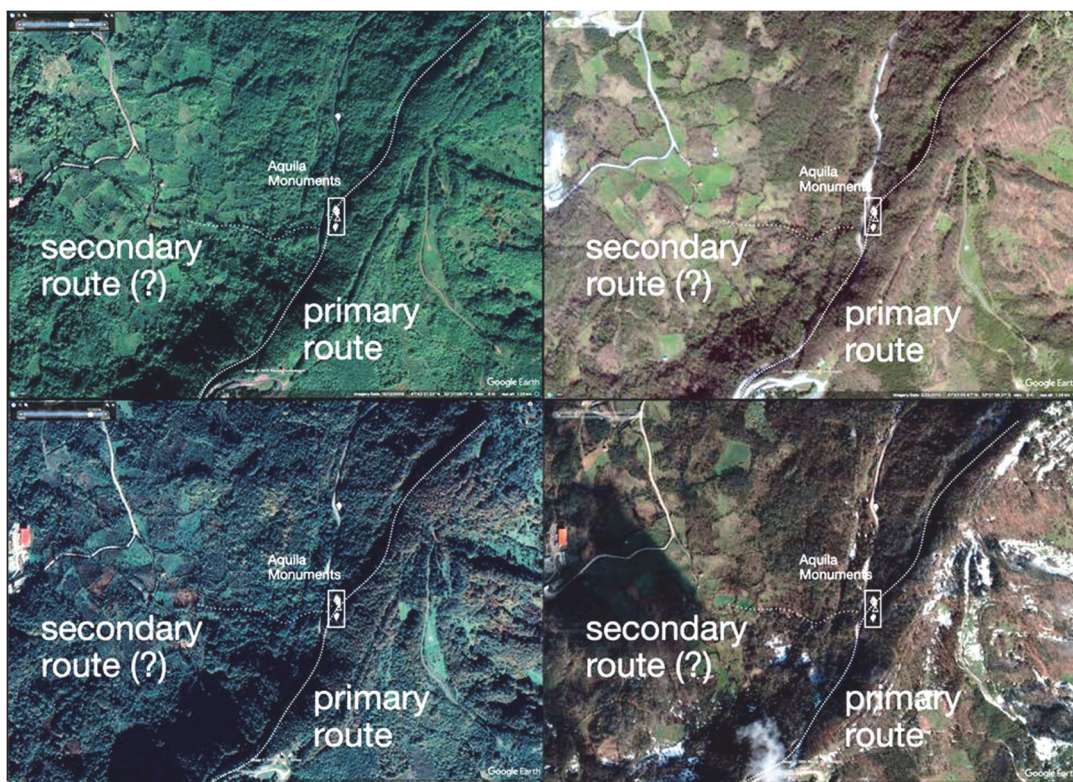


Fig. 16) Primary route: Bartın-Amasra; secondary route (?): potential connection with Tarlaağzı; Triangle: flight of stairs, projected geo-location tagging in Google Earth Pro. Base image Google Earth 2024, Maxar Technologies; annotations by author

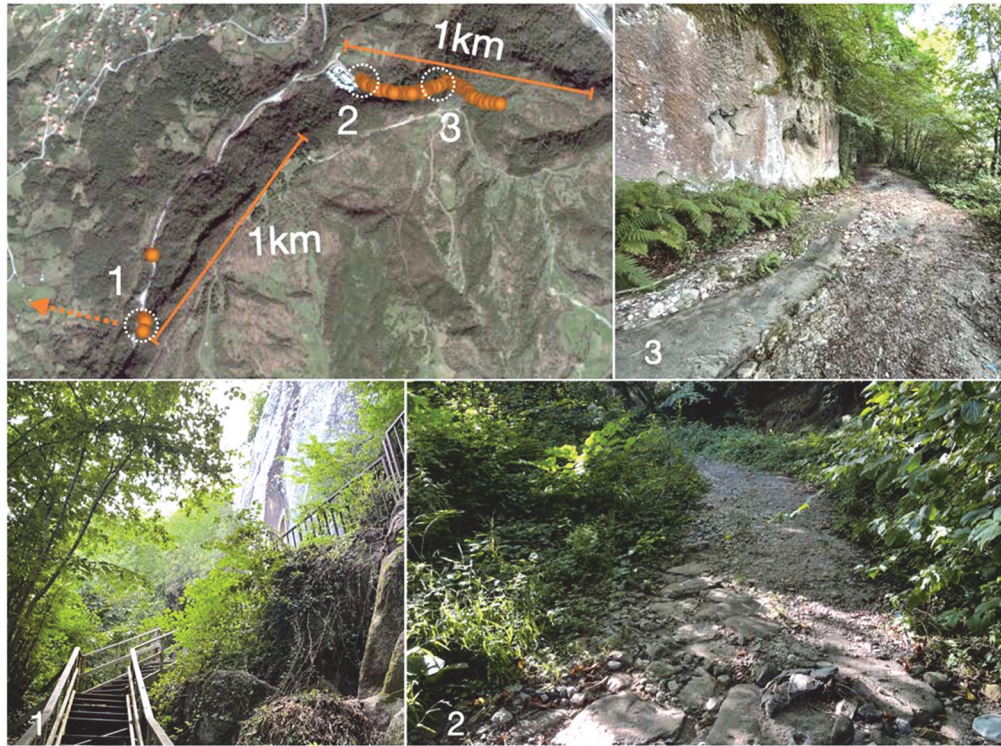


Fig. 17) Annotated image of Google Earth with geo-tagged photos of an east-west rock-cut and paved roadway (2, 3) north of Aquila monuments (1); photos by author, used with permission from Professor F. Bağdatlı Çam

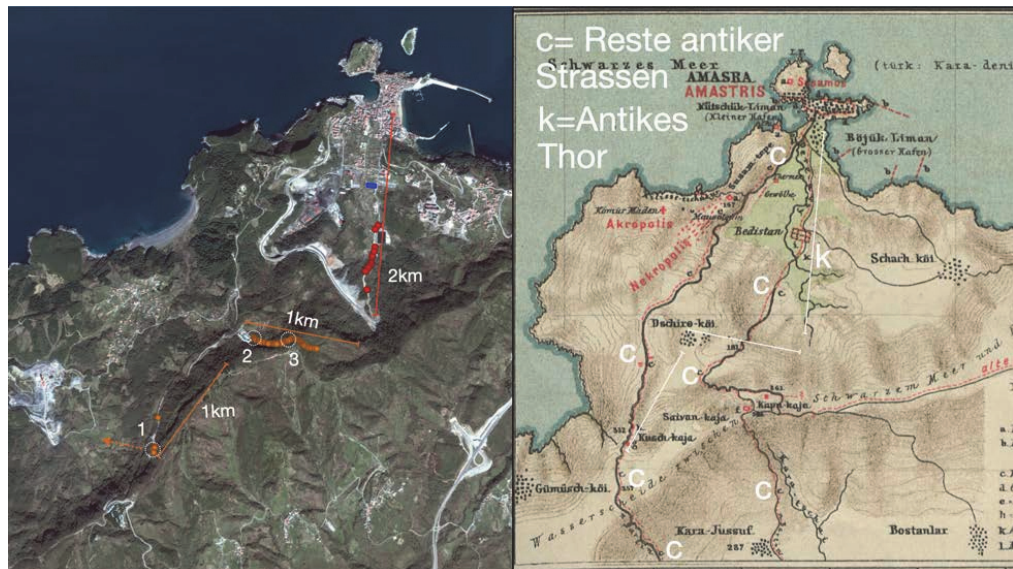


Fig. 18) The east-west vector based on geodata from photos taken by author (in orange), created with QGIS, base image, Google 2024; compared with the von Diest rendering of Amasra's local topography

A second “test” can be introduced to gauge the strengths of the secondary road thesis, though the way it can be carried out would be more akin to a thought experiment. Was the flight of stairs meant for foot traffic towards Amasra, or was it intended for access to the quarry? The second scenario implies there may have been first a quarry, followed by a decision (by Gaius Iulius Aquila the perpetuus sacerdos at Amastris) to convert the quarry into a passage (Fig. 19). To better assess the extent of the conversion of the road and its intended reach, comparisons between the flight of stairs leading down to the modern road with not only with the stepped stretch of the road but also

the stone dressing, cutting marks, and other aspects of workmanship such as measurements and positioning, would be necessary.

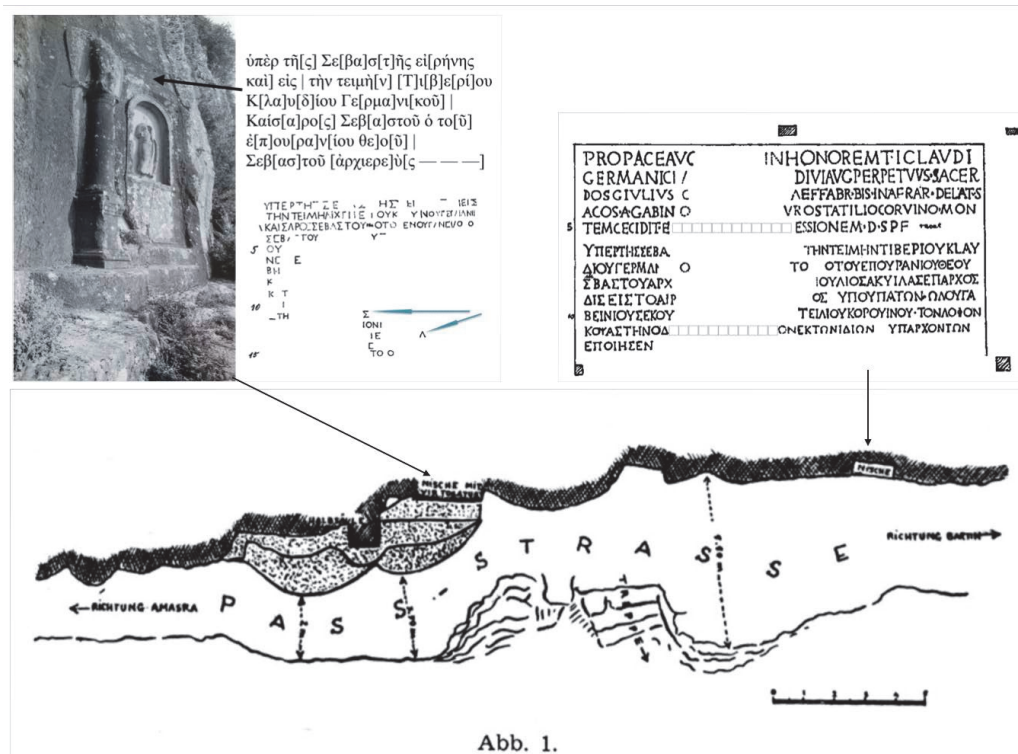


Fig. 19) Relative location of the two *tabulae ansatae*. Photo of the niche with the so-called *vir togatus*, and line drawing of the inscribed *tabula ansata* above, from Marek 1993, Tafel 24; line drawing of the inscribed *tabula ansata* on the rock face to the south of the niche and the *vir togatus*, from Kalinka 1933, 66

Alternatively, we can also use the unique series of inscribed rock-cut *tabulae ansatae* along the pass to discuss issues of diachronicity. The two *tabulae ansatae* are an interesting pair of somewhat redundant inscriptions. The inscription above the niche and so-called *vir togatus* suffered damage by weathering and also acts of sabotage, but enough letters from the first four lines allowed for the restoring of the preamble.⁴⁷ Restoration was also possible because the other text inscribed in *tabula ansata* to the right of the monument along the passageway to Bartın had essentially the same preamble: “on account of Augustan peace and to the honor of (emperor) Tiberius Claudius Germanicus Caesar Augustus, the high priest of *epouranios theos Sebastos*...” (ὕπερ τῆς Σεβαστῆς εἰρήνης καὶ εἰς τιμὴν Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Γερμανικοῦ Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ ὁ τοῦ ἐπουρανίου θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς ...).⁴⁸ What follows in both inscriptions remain identical at least with the Greek, and even if the first text suffered so much damage, the first letters of most of the lines seem to be the same as those in the second inscription. For this reason, we can perhaps be confident that both texts included the following content:

⁴⁷ Kalinka 1933, 64-65 no. 13.

⁴⁸ The straightforward interpretation of this dedicant-honorand relationship would be that the togate figure was Claudius himself. In this case, the removable head is both an indication of carefully sculpted portraiture, as well as leaving open the monument’s potential for reuse. Reusing imperial statuary did carry some degree of risk based on anecdotes from Suetonius, Suet. *Tib.* 58; on the examples of imperial statuary reuse, Blanck 1969, 65-94 discusses several examples (p. 86 B 44; 88 B 54; 90, B 63). Marek 1993, 92, interpreted the togate figure as the High Priest and equestrian Gaius Iulius Aquila, though the inscription above the statuary specifically honoring Claudius makes this identification difficult.

pro pace Au[gusti] in honorem Ti(berii) Claudi | Germanici [Caesaris Aug(usti)] Divi Aug(usti) perpetuus sacer[dos] C(aius) Iulius [Aquila pr]aef(ectus) fabr(um) bis in aerar(ium) delatus | a co(n)s(ulibus) A(ulo) Gabin[i]o [Secundo Ta]uro Statilio Corvino mon||tem cecidit e[st] viam ...c. 6...]essionem d(e) s(uis) p(ecuniam) f(ecit). | vacat | ὑπὲρ τῆς Σεβα[σ]τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ εἰς] τὴν τειμὴν Τιβερίου Κλαυ[δίου] Γερμ[ανικ]ο[ῦ] Καίσαρος Σεβασ[τοῦ] ὁ τοῦ ἐπουρανίου Θεοῦ | Σ<ε>βαστοῦ ἀρχ[ιερεὺς διὰ βίου? Γάϊος] Ἀκρίλας ἑπαρχος || δις εἰς τὸ αἶρ[άριον ἀναφερόμεν]ος ὑπὸ ὑπάτων Ὡλλου Γα[εινίου] Σεκού[νδου] καὶ Ταύρου Στα[τελίου] Κορουίνου τὸν λόφον | κόψας τὴν ὁδ[ὸν] ...c. 10...]ον ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ὑπαρχόντων | ἐποίησεν.

On account of the Augustan peace, in honor of Tiberius Claudius Germanicus Caesar Augustus, the permanent (high)-priest of (Epouranios) Divus Augustus, Gaius Iulius Aquila, registered twice at the aerarium as praefectus fabrum by the consuls Aulus Gabinius Secundus (then) Taurus Statilius Corvinus, cut through the mountain and made the road [...] from his own resources.

This is the interpretation in Harada and Cimok,⁴⁹ while Marek makes no determination as to whether both were bilingual. There has yet to be discussion on one unique feature that Kalinka took note of regarding the *tabula ansata* above the niched figure. He identified a four-bar *sigma* in line 11. Additionally, his drawing suggests that line 13 may have a trace of a *lambda* (Fig. 19).⁵⁰ Since Kalinka's facsimile was not reproduced by later scholars, if his drawings are accurate, then the first *tabula ansata* above the niche of the so-called *vir togatus* was inscribed entirely in Greek. In this scenario, the information contained in the final five lines would have been more than what we find in the second and more complete road-side *tabula ansata* to the south.

One could dismiss Kalinka's observations as erroneous. However, if there was nothing new to say, why inscribe an identical text twice along the same road? One could raise a number of scenarios, but there is a key issue here: were the texts of the *tabulae ansatae* created under the same circumstances or historical contexts, or were they created for different occasions? The existing features we have discussed—such as the stone quarry, stepped slope, transverse grooves, flight of stairs, and the sculpture program—could be assigned, albeit simplistically, to an evolving mountain passageway created through multiple phases of construction. The Aquila monument and its inscriptions may also have phases. Of course, the same text could have been inscribed twice, for reasons as simple as the earlier one was eroded or difficult to see. Yet, with Kalinka's observations in mind, the alternative is that there were two texts, one giving more information than the other, and together the two *tabulae ansatae* served as temporal punctuations for the gradual shaping of a mountain pass.

Additional features, such as the large rock-cut recess Eyice identified as a “niche” at the transition between the grooved and ungrooved sections of the road, and the irregular steps beneath the so-called *vir togatus*, invite further questions on whether non-road features created in addition to the cutting the mountain pass and building the road were part of a concerted, uniform plan and executed as part of one project. For example, the flat spaces under the niched figure – Mommsen's (or rather Hirschfeld's) *scamnum* – are particularly striking.⁵¹ Were these flat spaces planned as

⁴⁹ Harada – Cimok 2008, 196: “The site has two inscriptions in Greek and Latin, one above the figure, the other somewhat separated from it.”

⁵⁰ Kalinka 1933, 64.

⁵¹ *CIL* III suppl. 6983, see below.

part of the road, or were they later additions associated with the sculpture program? All these elements make the question of process and phase-oriented investigation of the Aquila monuments and the rock-cut road all the more relevant. While no determination can be made at this point, it is important to consider the likelihood that Aquila's rock-cut road, his monumental sculpture, associated inscriptions, and the various niches sunk in various places on the vertical rock face, were not created in a single, unified construction plan, but rather a series of investments and adjustments over time. This layered approach helps explain the diverse elements present and suggests that multiple phases of work may have gradually created the complex configuration we see today.

The Status of Aquila's Road

One last point this paper would like to address concerns the status of the passage. If Aquila built the road with his own resources – rather than using public funds, as a Roman magistrate (e.g., the governor or his legate) might have done,⁵² was Aquila's road "private" or "public"? For this question, we may turn to the *Digest's* excerpt of Ulpian's opinion on the question, where a hierarchy of roads was discussed, along with associated maintenance duties.⁵³

Uiam publicam eam dicimus, cuius etiam solum publicum est: non enim sicuti in priuata uia, ita et in publica accipimus: uiae priuatae solum alienum est, ius tantum eundi et agendi nobis competit: uiae autem publicae solum publicum est, relictum ad directum certis finibus latitudinis ab eo, qui ius publicandi habuit, ut ea publicae iretur commearetur. Uiarum quaedam publicae sunt, quaedam priuatae, quaedam uicinales. publicas uias dicimus, quas Graeci βασιλικάς, nostri praetorias, alii consulares uias appellant. priuatae sunt, quas agrarias quidam dicunt. uicinales sunt uiae, quae in uicis sunt uel quae in uicos ducunt: has quoque publicas esse quidam dicunt: quod ita uerum est, si non ex collatione priuatorum hoc iter constitutum est. aliter atque si ex collatione priuatorum reficiatur: nam si ex collatione priuatorum reficiatur, non utique priuata est: refectio enim idcirco de communi fit, quia usum utilitatemque communem habet. Priuatae uiae dupliciter accipi possunt, uel hae, quae sunt in agris, quibus imposita est seruitus, ut ad agrum alterius ducant, uel hae, quae ad agros ducunt, per quas omnibus commeare liceat, in quas exitur de uia consulari et sic post illam excipit uia uel iter uel actus ad uillam ducens. has ergo, quae post consularem excipiunt in uillas uel in alias colonias ducentes, putem etiam ipsas publicas esse. Hoc interdictum tantum ad uias

⁵² Cic. *Font.* 17-18: Obiectum est etiam quaestum M. Fonteium ex viarum munitione fecisse, ut aut ne cogeret munire, aut id quod munium esset ne improbaret. Si et coacti sunt munire omnes et multorum opera improbata sunt, certe utrumque falsum est, et ob vacationem pretium datum, cum immunis nemo fuerit, et ob probationem, cum multa improbata sint. ... Cum maioribus rei publicae negotiis M. Fonteius impediretur, et cum ad rem publicam pertineret uiam Domitiam muniri, legatis suis, primariis uiris, C. Annio Bellieno et C. Fonteio, negotium dedit; itaque praefuerunt; imperauerunt pro dignitate sua quod visum est et probauerunt. [It was also alleged that Marcus Fonteius made a profit from the construction of roads, either by not compelling people to build them or by not rejecting the work that had been completed. If everyone was compelled to build and many works were disapproved, then surely both accusations are false. That money was paid for exemption when no one was exempt, and that money was paid for approval when many works were disapproved. ... When Marcus Fonteius was hindered by more significant matters of the republic, and when it concerned the public interest that the Domitian Road be built, he entrusted the task to his legates, men of distinction, Gaius Annus Bellienus and Gaius Fonteius. Thus, they supervised the work, commanded what seemed appropriate according to their status, and approved it.]

⁵³ *Dig.* 43.8.20-23, esp. 43.8.22.

rusticas pertinet, ad urbicas uero non: harum enim cura pertinet ad magistratus. Si uiae publicae exemptus commeatus sit uel uia coartata, inter ueniunt magistratus.

“A road we call public (when) the land of which is also public: for we do not interpret a public road in the same way as a private road. The land of a private road belongs to another, and we have only the right to pass through it. The land of a public road is public, left open by specific boundaries by whoever had the right to make it public, so that it could be used for passage. Some roads are public, some private, and some are neighborhood roads. Public roads are what the Greeks call βασιλικά, some of us call praetorian roads, and others call consular roads. Private roads are those some call agricultural roads. Neighborhood roads are those in villages or leading to villages: some also consider these to be public, which is true if they were not established by contributions from private individuals. Otherwise, if they are repaired through private contributions, they are not necessarily private: the repair is done from the common fund because they serve a common use and utility. Private roads can be understood in two ways: either those in fields, which have been imposed as a servitude to lead to another's field, or those that lead to fields, through which everyone is allowed to pass, exiting from a consular road and then followed by a road, path, or way leading to a villa. I also consider these roads, which follow consular roads and lead to villas or other colonies, to be public. This interdict only applies to country roads, not to city roads: the care of those belongs to the magistrates. If passage on a public road is blocked or the road is narrowed, the magistrates will intervene.”

To better assess the potential status of Aquila's road, the following table is provided as rubric, based on Ulpian's points.

Rubric	Public Road	Private Road
Ownership of the Land	public land (built by public entity/authority)	land privately owned by individual or entity
Right of Passage	unrestricted right of passage for all users	restricted passage, based on servitude or specific rights
Type of Road	basilika, praetorian, or consular roads	agricultural roads / private estates
Maintenance and Funding	public funds or resources	private contributions, without public funding
Utility and Function	common utility, connecting public locations	Primarily serves private interests (e.g., providing access to fields or estates)
Location and Jurisdiction	country roads: under jurisdiction of magistrates city roads: inherently public	roads not under magistrate jurisdiction, managed by private owners or servitude holders
Connections to Other Roads	leads to or branches off from consular roads, connecting to villas / colonies / public locales	access to private estates, without significant connection to public infrastructure

Table 1) *Ulpianus' rubric for assessing public / private status of roadways (Dig. 43.8.1.1-25)*

Ulpian's praetor used the words “dicimus” and “accepimus.” These words suggest that whatever clear-cut rubrics distinguishing between private and public roads would have been contingent

upon the discretion of magistrates wielding a variety of authorities. Roman gubernatorial intervention in road construction and maintenance can happen, but the volume and intensity at which intervention takes place may be contingent upon a variety of factors, such as the degree of interventions governors were willing to make and the degree of autonomy a community awarded by the Roman establishment. For lands beyond the immediate reach of the *praetor urbanus* or the provincial governor, much of the local determination of what counts as public (and therefore ought to be maintained with public resources) may be up to the determination of local authorities.⁵⁴ Apart from the intangibles raised above, Ulpian's praetor also said that whether a road is public must not just be determined by the ownership of the land on which the road was built, whether the right of passage is unrestricted, but what sort of connection it made, and whether it was maintained by public funds or resources. For instance, roads built upon lands which ownership was clearly in private hands would theoretically make it a private road, but if public funds were used for maintenance, or even simply for the fact that a road maintained by private funds must serve the common good because of its connections to villas, colonies, or villages, then there are grounds for the road's status to be public. In other words, in the world of pragmatic governance, all roads may potentially be public.

Aquila's decision to explicitly state his personal contributions—"money" in the Latin and "resources" in the Greek—was far from *pro forma*. This declaration was likely made for effect, serving not merely to inform passersby about who built the roads (which is challenging to read, given the inscriptions are not at eye level and the niche inscription above the so-called *vir togatus* is angled upward. This orientation makes it even harder to read). Instead, these inscriptions functioned as evidence that the roads were technically "his." Aquila constructed them not in a public capacity nor with any clear intent to benefit the public. While there was a stone quarry in the vicinity, it is plausible that he had possession of it, and the quarry itself may have been part of his private estate.⁵⁵ For arguments against this proposition, one must consider that access to Amastris was not limited to this particular route. Von Diest's annotated topographical map clearly demonstrates that the hills south of Amasra contained multiple ancient pathways. Notably, the middle route leading from Kara-Jussuf northward, passing Kapa-Kaja, traversing a stretch of ancient roadway, and entering von Diest's "ancient gate" or the south entrance of Amastris, culminated at the so-called Bedesten—a monumental Roman bath complex.⁵⁶ This route, alongside the adjacent bath complex, perhaps offers a better basis for assessing the primary pathways connecting ancient Amastris.

Can additional evidence support this interpretation? We turn to the Latin, where the remaining letters of the fifth line *mon||tem cecidit e[t viam ...c. 6...]essionem d(e) s(uis) p(ecuniam) f(ecit)* may have some to offer. Since the publication of the *CIL* III supplement, Mommsen's restoration of *s]essionem* – which is understood as synonymous to *scamnus* ("bench") – continues to be the

⁵⁴ See Laurence 1999, 52-53 for an epigraphical survey involving *CIL* X 1064 (IIViri road-building); *CIL* V 1008 linking town to major roads; *CIL* X 3913 linking vici, etc.

⁵⁵ See discussion of "a patchwork of private or municipal lands and public mines, quarries, woods and pastures not amalgamated in one homogeneous imperial estate" in Noricum and elsewhere as a general rule, Hirt 2010, 53-56, 82-83, 85-90.

⁵⁶ Reviewers kindly provided new information regarding this building: excavations that began in Bedesten in 2023 proved that the structure was a Roman Bath; the road passing through the complex and the southern gate is now designated as the north-south *cardo maximus*, the city's main street. For prior research and identification of the building, see Hoffmann 1989.

dominant opinion. However, if we return to Mommsen's remarks, we find that his restoration was made on rather shaky grounds (*CIL* III suppl. 6983):

primus titulum totum descripsit Gustavus Hirschfeld et ectypum quoque sumpsit, ad quod recognovi cum Domaszewskio. 5 deficiunt litterae inter octo et duodecim (parum enim aequabiliter exaratas fuisse ostendunt hiatus vv. 3.4 spatio pares, dispaes numero litterarum deletarum); nos supplevimus septem. Post hiatum Domaszewskius sibi videre visus est C/SESSIONEM, fortasse recte; si verum vidit, fuit in lapide *viam ac sessionem*. Quod suppleveram *sessionem*, eo stabilitur, quod, ut scripsit Hirschfeldius, in photographia a Diestio sumpta cernitur scamnum ex ipsa rupe excavatum.

"Gustav Hirschfeld was the first to transcribe the entire inscription and also made a squeeze of it, which I reviewed together with Domaszewski. (Regarding line) 5, between eight and twelve letters are missing (for the letters had been engraved with little uniformity, shown by the lacunae in lines 3 and 4 being equal in spacing, but differing in the number of effaced letters). We restored seven letters. After the lacuna, Domaszewski believed he saw *c/essionem*, perhaps rightly; if indeed he saw (it), the inscription on the stone would have read *viam ac sessionem*. My restoration of *sessionem* is further supported by Hirschfeld's observation that, in a photograph taken by Diest, a bench/scamnum carved directly from the rock can be seen."

The fact that Mommsen did not base his restoration of *s/essionem* upon autopsy but rather upon a series of claims that Domaszewski and Hirschfeld made is disconcerting to say the least. There is also some liberty taken in determining the exact spacing of letters, though his point that the number of letters in lines 3 and 4 offer no useful guide to determine the space for line 5 is most reasonable. Mommsen's restoration apparently had lasting effect, even when later researchers find it difficult to identify Hirschfeld's *scamnus*. For example, Eyice suggested that the irregular steps beneath the niche of the *vir togatus* might be the "resting place" referenced in the inscriptions (nichts anderes als der 'Ruheplatz' von dem in den Inschriften die Rede ist), apparently attempting to reconcile with Mommsen's interpretation.⁵⁷ I am unaware of a quality photo for a closer determination.⁵⁸ For those who wish to at least test the *CIL* restoration, Ernst Kalinka's drawing of the inscription published in 1933 ought to be of some referential value, particularly since the *CIL* did not offer facimile reproductions but a clean diplomatic text.

What the comparison above shows is that both Kalinka's drawing and the *CIL* indicate that six letters can be filled in between *viam* and *sessionem*. Mommsen's approach is minimalist, which no doubt has virtues, but Eyice's struggle to identify exactly what the *scamnum* was highlights the risk of relying too heavily on the minimalist approach. An alternative is *poss[ess]ionem* in the Latin, based on a first century CE inscription *CIL* XIII 7252 from Mogontiacum (Mainz) that has *it[er] per* | *[possessi]onem suam ad templum* (a road through one's own property to a temple).⁵⁹ This inscription itself is heavily restored, but the restoration and the contextual fit was convincing enough for Camille Jullian to use it (alongside a range of sources *Digesta*) to discuss the Mâcon-

⁵⁷ Eyice 1955, 111. For another recent effort to support the bench theory, see Silvia 2021, 5-6.

⁵⁸ Marek 1993, Tafel 25, and Harada – Cimok 2008, 197 fig. 283 are subpar for purposes of close examination.

⁵⁹ E.g. Marti Lo]ucetio L(ucius) Iulius B[...] | [...] et Tert]ulla(?) fontem et it[er] per | [possessi]onem suam ad tem[plum] | [...]ARESACE[...] publice P[– –] (*CIL* XIII 7252).

nais region in Gaul as comprising a vicinal network that connected estates to locations for exploitation, to wooded borderlands shared by two estates, and to woodlands between estates and municipal holdings.⁶⁰ Admittedly, considerable difficulties with the Latin and especially the Greek make this a challenging case to argue. Under the *possessio* interpretation, Aquila's road would have been on Aquila's private property, but one would then have to either supply *suam* before possessionem or less ideally assert that *suam* is understood. The Greek τήν ὁδὸν ... c. 9]ον is especially challenging. the best fit for *possessio* is κτήμα, but with]ον in Kalinka's drawing it would be impossible. It is also not convincing to challenge the]ον on the basis that Kalinka marked the two letters as difficult, and give ὁδὸν διὰ τοῦ κτήματος, διὰ κτήσεως, unless additional scanning or probing of the stone offer good evidence to do so.

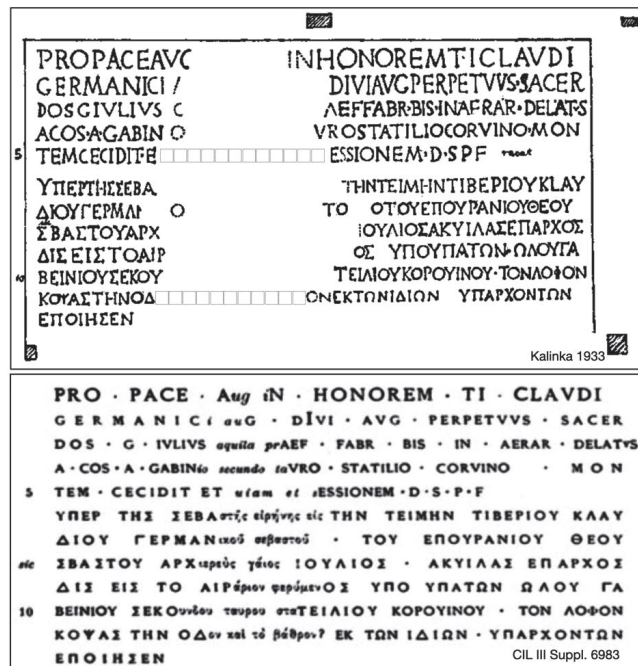


Fig. 20) Kalinka's drawing versus CIL III Suppl. 6983

Taking a step back, the oddity of Aquila's *tabulae ansatae* can be posed comparatively. We turn to another rock-cut bilingual inscription from 58/59 CE, also attributed to our Gaius Iulius Aquila, which offers further insights into his road-building activities.⁶¹ This inscription, located at Sarıkaya on the road to Gemlik along the southern shore of Lake Iznik, approximately 10 km south of ancient Nicaea (modern İznik), provides a precedent for interpreting Aquila's road-building efforts as having a private purpose (CIL III 346=I.Mus Iznik 9.13).

[Nero C]audius, Diui | [Claudi filius,] Germanici Caesaris n[e]pos, | [Ti. Caesaris Aug(usti)] pronepos, Diui Aug(usti) abnepos, Caesar | [Augustus Germanicus, p]on[t(ife)x max(imus)], trib(unicia) pot(estas) IIII, [imp(erator) V], co(n)s(ul) III, || [uiam Apamea Nicae]a[m collapsa]m uetustate restituit, muniendam | curauit [per Caium Iulium] Aquilam proc(uratorem) suum. Νέρων Κλαύδι[ος], Θεοῦ Κλαυδίου υἱός, Γερμανικοῦ | Καίσαρος υἱών[ος], Τιβερίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ [ἔ]γγονος, | Θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ἀ[πό]γονος, Καῖσαρ Σεβαστός Γερμανικός, ἀρχιερεὺς ||| μέγιστος, δ[η]μαρχι[κῆς ἐξου]σίας τὸ δ', αὐτοκράτωρ τὸ ε', ὑπάτος τὸ γ' [τήν] | 'δὸν ἀπὸ Ἀπαμε[ίας πρ]ὸς Νείκαιαν, κατεφθαρμένην τῇ ἀρχαιότη[τι], | ἀποκαθέστησε [καὶ κατασ]κευασθῆναι π[άλιν] προσ[έτα]ξεν [δ]ιὰ | Γαίου Ἰουλί[ου] Ἀκουίλα τὸῦ ἰδίου ἐπιτρόπου.

⁶⁰ Jullian 1926, 149-150, esp. 150 fn. 5: Corpus, XIII, 7252 (iter per possessionem suam ad templum). Chemins conduisant soit à des temples élevés par les particuliers dans leurs domaines (car je crois à l'existence de sanctuaires privés, et c'est sans doute le cas de bien des jana fores-liers) soit à des temples batis aux limites communes des fundi (Grom, p 302, fines templares). Le christianisme, en transformant ces temples en chapelles, a dû, surtout dans les bois, conserver la vogue de ces chemins, parfois peut-être jusqu'à nos jours.

⁶¹ Nero was consul designatus III from January to April of 58, and consul designatus IV from March 4th 59 CE, see Kienast 1996, 97.

“Nero Claudius, son of the divine Claudius, grandson of Germanicus Caesar, | great-grandson of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, [great-great-grandson] of the divine Augustus, Caesar Augustus Germanicus, high priest ||| holder of tribunician power for the fourth time, emperor for the fifth time, consul for the third time, [he restored] the road from Apamea to Nicaea, which had collapsed due to age, | and commanded it to be rebuilt [by] Gaius Iulius Aquila, his own procurator.”

The difference in agency between the two rock-cut inscriptions warrants particular attention. The Sarıkaya inscription explicitly states that Nero ordered the restoration and rebuilding of the collapsed road, with Aquila acting as the local agent tasked with executing the project. This presentation aligns with the common practice observed on miliaria from Bithynia-Pontus and other regions.⁶² In contrast, the roadside inscription at Amastris, framed in a road-side *tabula ansata*, portrays Aquila as the active builder. While his project was described as being carried out “on account of” Claudius and the peace he established, there is no indication that the emperor ordered the construction, nor does Aquila identify himself as Claudius’s procurator/epitropos, as he does in the Sarıkaya inscription. One might argue that the Amastris inscription could represent a benefaction for the public good. However, if that were the case, we would expect the inscription to pay homage to the city’s institutions or at least acknowledge the action’s euergetistic nature. No such language is present. It is difficult to view the rock-cut road and its associated monumental sculptures as a deliberate benefaction for public use. After all, the documents that should support such an interpretation fail to mention any such intention. The more plausible interpretation, then, is that the road served a private purpose.

Whether or not *viam per possessionem* or another interpretation is restored, the evidence we have gathered suggests that Aquila’s Road had a significant private component. The presence of masons’ marks nearby and the need for the rock-cut road to incorporate a load-bearing solution both suggest that Aquila may have sought to secure access to a quarry. The programmatic *pro pace Aug[usti] in honorem Ti(berius) Claudi etc.*, which is not found on the Sarıkaya rock-cut inscription, can in this wise be understood as a carefully crafted rhetoric for a project *de suis pecuniam fecit*. Here, we note just how unique Aquila’s statement is through the lens of Dalla Rosa’s remark, that “procurators were surely involved in the construction or maintenance of roads when imperial funds were used, but rarely appear on milestones or road dedications,” and that “we have no proof that they could be responsible for local roads, but this is an activity that hardly leaves traces in our epigraphic documentation.”⁶³ It may be so epigraphically, but Laurence’s survey of the literary sources suggest that the shared burden of construction and maintenance of private roads by owners of estates were topics covered in orations and letters at least from Cicero to Pliny in quite some detail.⁶⁴ Aquila’s message in the two *tabulae ansatae* suggests that we might just have this unique instance in which a procurator of equestrian rank was indeed responsible for building a local road at private expense.

It is also notable that Aquila created two distinct ontological states for the road. On the one hand, the road was “his” in the sense that Aquila initiated and funded its construction, likely to serve his

⁶² e.g. e.g., *I. Prusa*. 9-10; *CIL* 3.14188; *AE* 1938.158; *I.Mus. Iznik* II.1.1008; *AE* 1977.787-788, cf. Schneider 1935, 398; French 2013.

⁶³ Dalla Rosa 2020, 114.

⁶⁴ Laurence 1999, 54-55; Cic. *Quint. frat.* 3.1; Plin. *NH* 14.49, 31.25; Suet. *Nero* 48; *Dig.* 43.11; but also inscriptions *CIL* XIV 4231.

private interests—perhaps connecting his estates or providing access to a quarry or other form of landed possession. This point can still have merit when viewed comparatively with even if the restoration of *viam per possessionem* is technically questionable. On the other hand, the road was built “on account of” the pax under Claudius, implying that it contributed to the maintenance and curation of this imperial peace. This framing allowed Aquila to present the road as both private and public. While it was privately funded and driven by personal interests, it simultaneously served as a symbol or instrument of the broader imperial order.

This duality highlights the juridical and administrative authority wielded by Roman officials like Aquila, raising the question of whether he directly exercised such powers in shaping connectivity elsewhere in the Amastrian territorium. Further, if our interpretation of Aquila’s inscribed monumental pathway is accepted, it provides a foundation for exploring manifold models in which local, provincial, or imperial actors asserted ownership, influence, and authority as they negotiate and accommodate varying interests.

Conclusion

While the documentation work carried out by early travellers, scholars, and recent archaeologists have been able to generate quite some useful data for understanding the complexity of cities with evolving boundaries and complexities, the data have unique properties and traits that may be suitable for different scales of analyses. In this study, the data treated is local and in many ways limited to coverage within a square-kilometer south of Amastris. However, this square-kilometer seems to yield a striking assemblage of inscribed texts, monumental relief-sculpture, rock-cut roads, and even pathways that suggest varied strategies of access and communication.

Aquila’s roads illustrate the complex interplay between individual and imperial interests, as reflected in the inscriptions advertising a personal investment while invoking the Julio-Claudian Pax Augusta. If accepted, the likelihood that Aquila built his road(s) that facilitated private access to locales of exploitation of a quarry (and potentially other assets) underscores a strikingly sophisticated dimension in the invocation of Claudius’s *pax Augusta*. Aquila may have been much aware of the fluid boundaries of private ownership intersected with communal benefits and imperial narratives. Ulpian’s writings had yet to form under Claudius, but Aquila’s utilization of the legal framework Ulpian later delineated is a good indication that basic mobility infrastructures were negotiable assets, and personages of power understood how claims to private ownership and could be described in imperial terms.

In addition, the argument advanced here is how Aquila’s roads and monuments were diachronical and evolving projects instead of a single-phased, monolithic act. The variety of road-construction techniques on display, along with the many visual cues and monumental additions to the rock-cut stretch of roadway, may serve as proxies for understanding the evolving needs, priorities, and boundaries that defined the Amastrian region.

Essentially, this paper’s argument is for Aquila’s road to serve as a measure of the Amastrian transformation in the early Principate. As private and public functions merged through more involvement of communities in accessing and augmenting what may have originally been a private pathway for intra-patrimonial exploitation of an equestrian estate, growing interest on the part of the equestrian domus to tap into the broader legacies led to further expanding mobility projects in the name of the empire. It is in this light that one may return to Marek’s analysis of the Iulii Aquilae, burgeoning into one of the leading families of the Amastrian political landscape in the

late first century CE.⁶⁵ The increasing monumentality of the rock-cut road, culminating in the crafting of the commemorative niched *vir togatus*, may have thus been realized along with increasing connectedness in Amastrian lands.

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⁶⁵ Marek 1993, 98-100.

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Aquila'nın Yolları: Paphlagonia Alanlarını Bağlamak

Özet

Bu çalışma, antik Amastris (modern Amasra) şehrinin sosyo-politik yapısını, yol altyapısı perspektifinden, özellikle de Aquila'nın yollarının inşası ve önemi üzerine odaklanarak incelemektedir. Kuzey Anadolu'nun zorlu Küre Dağları arazisinde yer alan Amastris, Paphlagonia'daki çeşitli iç ve kıyı topluluklarını birbirine bağlayan hayati bir denizcilik merkeziydi. Antik edebi metinlerin analizi, arkeolojik kanıtlar, coğrafi modelleme ve modern fotogrametriyi birleştiren çok disiplinli bir yaklaşım benimseyen bu makale, Amastris'ten yayılan birincil ve ikincil Roma yol ağını yeniden yapılandırmaktadır. Araştırma, bu yolların hem bölgesel bütünleşmeyi sağlamadaki hem de yerel özerkliği desteklerken imparatorluk yönetimini güçlendirmedeki çifte rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Temel bulgular, Aquila'nın yollarının yalnızca altyapısal projeler olmadığını, aynı zamanda özel yatırımları kamu yararıyla birleştiren stratejik girişimler olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu projeler, Roma eyalet yönetiminde bireysel girişimler ile devlet çıkarlarının karmaşık etkileşimini yansıtmaktadır. Ayrıca, çalışma Amastris'teki yol inşaatının daha geniş kültürel ve ekonomik etkilerini inceleyerek, bağlantısallığın kent kimliğini, sosyal bütünleşmeyi ve toprak bütünlüğünü nasıl şekillendirdiğini göstermektedir. Makale, Aquila'nın yol yapım girişimlerinin, Amastris'in Roma İmparatorluğu içindeki stratejik önemi ve işlevselliğini sürdürmede hayati bir rol oynadığını savunmaktadır. Yerel ve imparatorluk önceliklerinin dinamik ilişkisini inceleyen bu çalışma, altyapının antik Anadolu'da yönetim, ekonomik kalkınma ve bölgesel entegrasyonun bir bağlantı noktası olarak nasıl işlev gördüğüne dair öngörüler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Amastris; Paphlagonia; Roma yolları; bölgesel uyum; Gaius Iulius Aquila.