

## The Late Milestones of Asia Minor

Sylvain DESTEPHEN\*

*In honour of Prof. Dr. Johannes Nollé*

In the last few years we have gained a thorough knowledge of the milestones preserved in Asia Minor thanks to field research conducted during decades by the epigraphist and archaeologist David Henry French, who passed away in 2017. Of course, other researches have been carried out in different parts of the Roman Empire, such as Caria, Transpadana, Africa Proconsularis, Narbonensis, Raetia or modern Switzerland, but no one has collected so many milestones on such a scale as French.<sup>1</sup> This impressive ten-volume corpus, published online by the British Institute at Ankara, is now at the disposal of all scholars interested in the administrative and geographical history of Roman Asia Minor.<sup>2</sup> The corpus represents the ultimate database to study the geographical and chronological distribution of milestones and roads in Asia Minor from the Roman Republic to the end of Antiquity (second century BC to the early sixth century AD). In addition, surveys and excavations carried out by national, foreign and joint teams of archaeologists and epigraphists bring to light new milestones every year, particularly in areas which have more recently aroused the interest of the international scholarly community such as Northern Asia Minor.<sup>3</sup>

We should note that milestones are the commonest display of power in the Roman world, even if their quantity depends less on the ancient road network than on modern activity, since the latter tends to obliterate epigraphic remains. The volume of milestones collected throughout the Roman Empire has considerably increased with the progress of knowledge through archaeological excavations: 4000 Roman milestones were known in the early twentieth century, 6000 at the beginning of the next.<sup>4</sup> In the case of Asia Minor, where French collected more than 1200 milestones, the unbalanced distribution of milestones results mainly from the reuse or destruction of stones. The unequal size of the six volumes of milestones published by French – with the exception of the first volume dedicated to the milestones of the Republican period and the last three volumes of indices, maps and itineraries – reflects this uneven geographical distribution. A few inscriptions have been discovered in regions now densely populated such as Bithynia, Pamphylia and Cilicia.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, many milestones have been preserved on the Anatolian plateau, particularly in Galatia and Cappadocia where

---

\* Sylvain Destephen, Université Paris Nanterre - Département d'histoire, 200, avenue de la République 92001 Nanterre France (sdesteph@parisnanterre.fr).

I would like to express all my gratitude for his kind help to Michael Featherstone. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the anonymous reviewer for her/his useful suggestions and emendations.

<sup>1</sup> See Hild 2014; Banza 1999; Salama 1987; Walser 1983; König 1970; Walser 1967.

<sup>2</sup> French 2012-2016.

<sup>3</sup> Marek 2015, 316-318.

<sup>4</sup> Lafaye 1877, 1897; Schneider 1935, 428; Chevallier 1997, 63; Kolb 2004, 137-138; Bekker-Nielsen 2012, 5855.

<sup>5</sup> French 2012-2016, vol. 3.4, 3.6 and 3.7.

the density is significantly lower than in the coastal plains above.<sup>6</sup> Here and there local exceptions exist and new archaeological surveys complete the picture, but without changing the overall distribution. In other words, the uneven distribution of milestones in Asia Minor, as exemplified by French's corpus, will not be drastically modified by new epigraphic discoveries.

In contrast, the unbalanced chronological distribution of milestones is more striking and requires more attention and caution as well. This paper aims at understanding the sudden rise and rapid decline of milestones in Asia Minor, although the whole region was subjected to Roman authority long before Late Antiquity. The Roman conquest of Asia Minor was mainly undertaken at the end of the Roman Republic, roughly from the late second to the end of the first century B.C. As the Republic's rule over Asia Minor was short, milestones erected during this period are fewer than those of the imperial era.<sup>7</sup> The first major transformation took place during the High Roman Empire, when the texts inscribed or painted on milestones changed. Henceforth the Roman magistrates who supervised the construction or repair of public roads, i.e. provincial governors, are mentioned after the emperor,<sup>8</sup> whose official titulature appeared at the beginning of the principate of Augustus. Indications of places, people and functions are extremely valuable for the administrative history of Asia Minor and the prosopography of the Roman ruling class.<sup>9</sup>

The second major change in the epigraphic formula used on milestones, already apparent in the days the Julio-Claudian dynasty, developed clearly from the reign of Septimius Severus onwards and became the standard way of inscribing milestones for centuries: the indicative and practical value of milestones was superseded by a dedicatory and votive character. Emperors' names were still followed by titles, functions and dignities related to magistracies, priesthoods and victories, but milestones also recorded salutations sent by cities to the emperor.<sup>10</sup> Mention of local acclamations upon milestones proves that municipal authorities funded the repair of roads. The erection or renovation of milestones was also a duty of subject peoples, and maintaining the road network was a compulsory service for the cities whose territories were crossed by public roads.<sup>11</sup> However, each milestone did not record the construction or renovation of a road – far from it! – despite the occasional mention of distances and directions. Besides this information has often disappeared since it was frequently noted in paint, whereas the authorities' names and status were inscribed. Milestones were mostly symbolic landmarks erected by central or local authorities along main roads. As milestones were still tools of propaganda as well, they reminded bystanders and travellers of the public nature of the road and enhanced the pervasive presence of imperial power.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> French 2012-2016, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> French 2012-2016, vol. 3.1.

<sup>8</sup> See Rathmann 2006, 206-212 and also 235-247 with a list of Roman governors and magistrates related to the construction of roads in Asia Minor.

<sup>9</sup> Schneider 1935, col. 396-7; Pekáry 1968, 16-22.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. French 2012-2016, vol. 3.2, 158-159, no. 94(A): milestone found on the Via Sebaste some 20 km south-east of Pisidian Antioch and used several times between Hadrian and Constantine's dynasty.

<sup>11</sup> Kolb 2004, 141 and 148-149.

<sup>12</sup> König 1973, 419-427; Schneider 1982, 106-110; Chevallier 1997, 61-67; Eck 2004, 6; Laurence 2004, 46-47; Mrozewicz 2004, 356-359.

As noted above, Asia Minor occupies a special place in the field of Roman studies because of the high volume of epigraphic monuments. Consequently, a large array of scholarly publications has for years been dedicated to collecting and editing inscriptions in regional, municipal and thematic corpora, as French has done for milestones. Furthermore, Asia Minor gained a special strategic importance from the third century onwards because of the increasing threats to the eastern frontier of the Roman empire and the need to maintain the road network and thus facilitate the circulation of troops and supplies in the face of the Parthian and later Sassanian empire.<sup>13</sup> It is important to recall that erecting or updating milestones does not imply a systematic renovation of a public road, nor is it evidence that an emperor was on the move nearby. One should not consider milestones as compelling proof of public work or imperial travels. Many surviving milestones found in Asia Minor were definitely related to local or provincial authorities and cannot be associated with troop movements or emperors' journeys in Late Antiquity.<sup>14</sup>

Late Antiquity differentiated itself from the previous period by the multiplication of imperial residences: Diocletian built his favourite palace at Nicomedia, in north-western Asia Minor, and Constantine settled his headquarters on the Bosphorus. The foundation of Constantinople, its upgrading to the rank of capital and the strategic importance of Antioch caused Late Roman emperors to use more frequently the Anatolian road network connecting the Bosphorus with Syria. It constituted a 1.050km route and ideally should have counted as many milestones as its 675 miles in length.<sup>15</sup> This track, hereafter called the Transanatolian highway, has provided only some 130 milestones. Chronological and geographical distribution gives evidence for the transformation of milestones in Late Antiquity. As already noted, the preserved milestones are mainly located in the north-western part of the Anatolian plateau whereas they have almost vanished from Cilicia and Bithynia, both regions densely inhabited during the Medieval and Modern era. Dedicated to one or several emperors, milestones found along the so-called Transanatolian highway span the late-first to the late-fourth centuries. The epigraphic habit of inscribing or painting milestones does not imply that milestones multiplied over time, particularly in Late Antiquity when it was frequent to reuse, erase or place upside down milestones which had been previously erected. In a few cases milestones could even be used six, seven or eight times.<sup>16</sup>

Regardless of the duration of their reign, brief or long, not all Roman emperors are mentioned on the late milestones of Asia Minor, nor are they mentioned with equal frequency. One third of the milestones along the Transanatolian highway connecting Constantinople with the Syrian Gates was

---

<sup>13</sup> For instance Frye 1983, 124-131; Potter 2004, 213-228; Herrmann 2013, 155-160.

<sup>14</sup> For instance French 2012-2016, vol. 3.3, 45-46, no 18: milestone erected in the vicinity of Amasea by Aurelius Priscianus, who was governor of Pontus during the Tetrarchy. See also Marek 2015, 324-326.

<sup>15</sup> Overview in French 1981.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. French 2012-2016, vol. 3.2, 158-159, no 094: milestone found in Northern Galatia on the road from Ancyra to Gangra and used six times between Hadrian and Constantine's sons; vol. 3.3, 40-43, no 015: milestone discovered between Amasea and Neocaesarea in Pontus and inscribed seven times from Diocletian to Honorius; vol. 3.4, 39-41, no 08(C): milestone found near Sinope in Pontus and used seven times between Constantius I and an emperor posterior to Arcadius whose name is illegible; vol. 3.5, 262-264, no 142(C): milestone discovered on the Via Sebaste, midway between Laodicea on the Lycus in Phrygia and Sagalassus, and inscribed eight times from Domitian (hypothetically) to Theodosius II.

erected or reused under Diocletian or Constantine.<sup>17</sup> Both emperors are overrepresented in this medium not only in Asia Minor but also in other parts of the Roman Empire such as Northern Africa.<sup>18</sup> The mention of Diocletian and Constantine on milestones in these regions is proof that these latter did not commemorate an emperor's passage and thus cannot provide evidence of logistical preparation for a military campaign commanded by the emperor himself. Indeed, the milestones found along the Transanatolian highway exclude their connexion with imperial journeys: even if Diocletian crossed over Anatolia five or six times, in 285, 286, 287 (?), 290, 296 and 302, Constantine never traversed this region during his reign (306-337).<sup>19</sup> Even after Licinius's defeat and the annexation of his domains in 324, Constantine never ventured beyond Bithynia and the city of Nicomedia. Conversely, only a few milestones mention Constantius II (337-361) although he crossed over Anatolia seven or eight times, in 337, 342, 344 (?), 345, 346, 349, 350 and 360. After the Constantinian dynasty and the advent of the Valentinian dynasty milestones definitively diminished in Asia Minor, despite the fact that Valens (364-378) crossed through the region several times to reach the Danube and the Euphrates in order to repel invasions or launch offensives.<sup>20</sup> The physical presence of an emperor was not required for the erection or renovation of milestones since they were not related to the journeys of the emperor with his court and army. Late milestones should rather be regarded as public monuments – votive or dedicatory – which fall into the category of honorific inscriptions. Just as a statue and pedestal dedicated to an emperor did not suggest the emperor's presence in the city which offered the monument, in the same way the renovation or reuse of a milestone in honour of a fourth-century peripatetic emperor was a token of loyalty, submission and gratitude given by local communities to a mostly absent ruler. Besides imperial titulature was much simplified in Late Antiquity: victory titles disappeared as well as mentions of the major Roman civic priesthood (*pontifex maximus*), magistracy (consul) and competence (tribunician power) formerly assumed by emperors.

Insofar as late milestones hardly mention the distance to be travelled from one city to another and were not related to imperial journeys or renovation work, one wonders about their real function in Asia Minor. It should be noted that itineraries and official maps conserved or produced in this period, such as the Antonine Itinerary or the Tabula Peutingeriana, had no practical, but rather an administrative purpose.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, we can assume that late antique milestones were no longer mile-markers erected here and there to guide voyagers. Their purpose had shifted and this could explain their diminution and disappearance. They were already rare in the Valentinian dynasty (364-378) and vanished from the Transanatolian highway during the Theodosian dynasty (379-450). It is tempting to assume that the centralisation of the Theodosian emperors caused the disuse of milestones, but we have seen that new or renovated milestones appear to become scarce already under

---

<sup>17</sup> List of milestones found alongside this road is given by French 2016-2016, vol. 3.2, 174-222; vol. 3.3, 263-277; vol. 3.4, 111-146; vol. 3.7, 56-60. See also French 1980, 720-1; Kolb 2004, 139.

<sup>18</sup> Salama 1987, 56 and 83-84.

<sup>19</sup> On the chronology and geography of Diocletian and Constantine's journeys see Seeck 1919 [1984], 159-184 (from 312 onwards); Barnes 1982, 49-56 and 68-80; Wilkes 2008, 719-720 and 722-723; Destephen 2016A, 355-357 (from 330 onwards).

<sup>20</sup> On Constantius II's and Valens's journeys see Seeck 1919 [1984], 184-208 and 215-251; Barnes 1993, 218-224; Pergami 1993; Cuneo 1997; Barnes 1998, 247-254; Schmidt-Hofner 2008; Destephen 2016A, 357-364 and 366-371.

<sup>21</sup> Dilke 1987, 236 and 239; Herrmann 2007, 74; Talbert 2010, 142-157.

Constantius II and Valens who crossed through Asia Minor extensively. Thus, there was no relation between imperial mobility and milestones; nor would it have been the progressive settling of the emperors in Constantinople which led to the gradual and definitive disappearance of milestones.<sup>22</sup>

Milestones related to Constantius II give a clue to the different nature of late milestones. The milestones in French's catalogue mention Constantius II only in association with his father Constantine and when he ruled with his two brothers Constantine II and Constans, between 333 and 340. No milestone is personally dedicated to Constantius II, but to the imperial college formed by Constantine and his three sons.<sup>23</sup> In other words, milestones commemorated the political unity embodied by the two generations of emperors belonging to the same family rather than honouring Constantius II's personal rule or his relations with cities scattered along the roads of Asia Minor. Moreover, the chronological distribution of milestones on the Transanatolian highway belong to the very beginning of Constantius II's reign, when he was based on the Danube frontier or in Syrian Antioch.<sup>24</sup> It is puzzling that not a single milestone was dedicated to Constantius II when he became sole ruler of the Roman Empire in 350. Provincial governors and municipal authorities – responsible for erecting or reusing milestones – did not regard it as necessary to assert the full legitimacy of Constantius II, who exercised undivided rule in Asia Minor immediately upon Constantine's death in 337. In the same way, milestones mentioning Valens date from the beginning of his reign, when he was co-emperor with his brother Valentinian I, and some milestones were completed when Gratian, Valentinian's elder son, was associated with his father's and uncle's rule in 367. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that most of the twenty-odd milestones found across Asia Minor which are contemporary with Theodosius I date from 379-383, when he was co-ruler with Gratian and Valentinian II.<sup>25</sup> By all accounts, in the time of the Constantinian, Valentinian and Theodosian emperors, milestones constituted only a political message, not a road sign. Throughout the Roman Empire, milestones displayed a new dynasty or imperial college's legitimacy, they were not intended to extol any long-established individual ruler.

Milestones tended to multiply in the first years of a new emperor or dynasty and become scarce after the beginning of a reign or dynasty, regardless of the actual impact of the new ruler. The decreased interest in military action and the consecutive demilitarisation of the emperors, whose travels greatly diminished in the first half of the fifth century,<sup>26</sup> did not cause the disappearance of milestones since this had begun with Constantius II and Valens, both bellicose emperors. Moreover, the gradual disappearance of milestones along the Transanatolian highway was contemporary with the reduction

---

<sup>22</sup> On the sedentarisation of the emperors in Constantinople under the Theodosians, see Destephen 2016B.

<sup>23</sup> French 2012-2016, *passim*. It is worth noting that the name of Dalmatius, Constantine's nephew and co-ruler, was erased from milestones after his murder in Constantinople in summer 337, shortly after Constantine's death near Nicomedia. On the chronology of this event see Burgess 2008 [2014]; Maraval 2013, 24-34.

<sup>24</sup> On the chronology and geography of Constantius II's travels see above n. 15, and also Maraval 2013, 21-22 when he was Caesar and not Augustus yet.

<sup>25</sup> French 2012-2016, vol. 3.2, 36, no 016(A)5 in Phrygia Pacatiana; 157-158, no 093(B) in Pisidia; vol. 3.4, 38-40, nos 008(B) and 008(C) in Helenopontus; vol. 3.5, 72 and 74, nos 024.2 and 025.7 in Northern Asia; 86, no 039.6 in Phrygia Pacatiana (hypothetical); 101, no 048.6 and 187-188, no 101(B)3 both in Phrygia Pacatiana; 260 and 263, nos 142(A) and 142(C)6 again in Phrygia Pacatiana.

<sup>26</sup> On the gradual reduction of imperial mobility during this period, see Destephen 2016A, 84-109; Destephen 2016B.

of milestones found in other regions of Asia Minor which had no strategic value. Consequently, the rarefaction of milestones on the major road connecting Constantinople to Antioch and the Eastern frontier had nothing to do with the reduction and later cessation of hostilities with the Sassanian Empire in the fifth century.<sup>27</sup> In sum, the chronological and geographical distribution of late milestones in Asia Minor was dependant neither on military deployments nor logistical imperatives. The last milestones of late antique Asia Minor had lost any practical value to the point that the few preserved inscriptions mention no distance or destination.<sup>28</sup> Earlier mile-markers had become material supports for inscribing dedications and acclamations in honour of emperors who were rarely on the move and whom local communities of Asia Minor saw only in exceptional circumstances.

It is important to recall that the demilitarisation of Late Roman emperors was not exactly contemporary with their settling down in Constantinople.<sup>29</sup> At the end of the fourth century, Theodosius I was the last emperor of the eastern half of the Roman world to lead an army personally on the battlefield until Heraclius did this again in the early seventh century. Yet the emperors settled in Constantinople continued journeying routinely every summer in the Eastern Balkans and Western Asia Minor until the middle of the fifth century.<sup>30</sup> Even after the Theodosian dynasty, some emperors made occasional trips for diverse reasons – administrative tours, military reviews, inspections of fortifications, pilgrimages – to central Anatolia and the straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Though the emperor became a distant political figure from the fifth century onwards, the paucity of milestones in Asia Minor is observed as early as the mid-fourth century and rapidly increases from the last quarter of the fourth century, as French's corpus contains only some thirty milestones dated from the late fourth to the early sixth century. The tradition of carving milestones became so unusual that the last milestones of Asia Minor were not original, but reused stones, on which the new ruler's name was added to an extended list of emperors.

The ten milestones dated to the reign of Theodosius II (408-450), the longest in Roman history after Augustus,<sup>31</sup> exemplify the decline of milestones in Asia Minor at the end of Antiquity. A notable peculiarity is the very limited geographical distribution of these milestones in French's corpus. As in the case of milestones pertaining to Theodosius I, none of those associated with his grandson Theodosius II has been found along the Transanatolian highway. While Theodosius I's milestones are scattered, albeit in small quantities, throughout Asia Minor, Theodosius II's few milestones are all concentrated in south-western Asia Minor. Even regions where milestones are abundant, such as the centre and north of the Anatolian plateau, have provided no milestone contemporary with Theodosius II. The few which are dedicated to him originate in Hellespontus, Phrygia Pacatiana, Lycia and

---

<sup>27</sup> Greatrex – Lieu 2002, 31-62.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. ISide 176, 177 and 179. All the three references deal with a single milestone found in Side and inscribed three times. The first inscription was a Greek dedication in honour of Septimius Severus and his sons Caracalla and Geta (the latter's name was erased after his assassination) and indicated a distance; the second inscription, now largely illegible, was written in Latin under Diocletian and the other members of the tetrarchic college and also provided a distance; the third text was a dedication in Greek to Constans and did not mention any distance.

<sup>29</sup> See Destephen forthcoming.

<sup>30</sup> On the geography and chronology of Arcadius and Theodosius II's journeys, see Seeck 1919 [1984], 285-387; Destephen 2016A, 382-397.

<sup>31</sup> On this emperor see the proceedings of a conference edited by Kelly 2013.

several provinces created after the dismemberment of the former province of Asia Proconsularis, namely Asia, Caria and Lydia.<sup>32</sup> Although we have seen that the erection of milestones was not related to imperial journeys, we nevertheless find the last milestones of Asia Minor in the few regions traversed or visited by Theodosius II. However, the small number of preserved milestones suggests caution: this unexpected distribution might be fortuitous. Moreover, an epigraphic phenomenon previously seen with Constantine and his sons also appears in the case of Theodosius II: milestones dedicated to this emperor do not provide any geographical information and are basically public inscriptions in honour of emperors of the same kin who ruled jointly. As in the Constantinian era, the last milestones of late Asia Minor were casual dynastic monuments whereby Theodosius II was associated with his father Arcadius, his uncle Honorius and his son-in-law Valentinian III.<sup>33</sup> Milestones almost vanish from Asia Minor after the Theodosian dynasty.

Besides their large quantities, the Constantinian milestones discovered in Asia Minor differ from those of the Theodosian period in another way: Constantinian milestones are written in Latin, but nearly all Theodosian milestones are in Greek. This change of language is an additional proof that late milestones were erected or reused by local authorities, for in the fifth century local administrations, represented by civic magistrates, used only Greek, whereas the central administration continued to use Latin as official language and the provincial administration still favoured Latin or at least bilingualism in public inscriptions.<sup>34</sup> Hellenisation of the last milestones of Asia Minor reveals a lack of interest on the part of central and provincial authorities in old stones which had become obsolete political landmarks. Once systematic, now episodic, the last milestones were no longer public displays of central power upon territories, but anecdotal evidence of loyalty given by a few local communities.

The gradual vanishing of milestones throughout provinces did not imply that the central administration loosened its grip on cities and individuals or lost interest in the road network, for maintenance costs still burdened communities settled along it. As is clearly demonstrated by a law enacted in 423 by Honorius and Theodosius II, every subject of the emperors, whatever his condition or privilege, was expected to contribute to the maintenance of public roads under the supervision of governors.<sup>35</sup> The law states that inscriptions should commemorate road works carried out in the name of the rulers. However it is difficult to regard these inscriptions as milestones since these latter had become scarce when the law was passed; nor were milestones erected by the central or provincial authorities. Perhaps this law refers to dedicatory inscriptions carved on buildings erected along roads such as bridges or gates since this epigraphic habit continued in Late Antiquity and beyond.

In the provinces where Roman rule collapsed the road network began to deteriorate rapidly and milestones became curiosities for travellers such as Sidonius Apollinaris in his poetical descriptions

---

<sup>32</sup> French 2012-2016, vol. 3.5, 107, no 052(B)6 in Hellespontus; 132, no 066 in Phrygia Pacatiana; 196, no 107(B)2 in Asia; 177, no 095(A)4 in Caria; 261 and 263, nos 142(B)3 and 142(C)8 in Asia; 265, no 144(A)3 in Lydia; 275, no 152 in Caria; vol. 3.6, 69 and 70, nos 32(A)3 and 32(B)2 in Lycia.

<sup>33</sup> One exception is provided by French 2012-2016, vol. 3.5, 132, no 066: milestone written in Latin, not Greek, and discovered south of the city of Sebaste in Phrygia Pacatiana.

<sup>34</sup> On the use of Latin as an administrative language in the late Roman East see Millar 2006, 20-25 and 84-93; Feissel 2006 for the epigraphic aspects.

<sup>35</sup> *CTh* 15.3.6.

of them in fifth-century Gaul.<sup>36</sup> Conversely, in Asia Minor where Roman rule prevailed over Barbarian invasions and political demise, the regional road network was maintained, although even in Asia Minor roads underwent substantial changes. For instance, in south-west Cilicia, steps were built into a road connecting the cities of Corycos, Olba and Corasion.<sup>37</sup> Due to the limited importance of this road, this modification was without doubt decided by local authorities. Henceforth the road was traversable only by pedestrians, riders, muleteers and light carriages, but inaccessible for heavy carriages.<sup>38</sup> Structural alterations of the road network also affected the Transanatolian highway. In the early sixth century, the whole aspect of this major road was definitively altered, with a narrower path in some sections and the addition of steps in others.<sup>39</sup>

Although the erection of milestones ceased in Asia Minor by the mid-fifth century, a handful of them unexpectedly appear in the early sixth century. But this resurgence of a few milestones and the transformation of the road network must be coincidental since, as we have seen, the erection or renovation of milestones was not related to road maintenance or the journeys of emperors in Late Antiquity. French's catalogue lists only four milestones reused under Anastasius (491-518). Two milestones found close to Halicarnassus in Caria mention the emperor but also a governor named Iohannes, although milestones rarely mention provincial governors after the mid-fourth century.<sup>40</sup> A third milestone, discovered between Tralles and Antioch on the Meander, also mentions the same emperor and governor.<sup>41</sup> It would appear that all three milestones should be attributed to the personal initiative of a governor eager to spread the name of the ruling emperor and his own along the roads of the province. Despite the fact that inscribing milestones was completely anachronistic for a governor at the end of Antiquity, this unusual epigraphic behaviour was imitated by another governor of Caria: in Bargylia, a fourth milestone was renovated under Anastasius by the governor Procopius. The emperor's name was partially erased by that of his successor, Justin I (518-527), whilst the governor's name was fully preserved.<sup>42</sup> This governor Procopius apparently served under both emperors.<sup>43</sup>

Against all odds, then, these last milestones in late Asia Minor were reused by governors, whereas since the end of the Theodosian period milestones had become rare monuments dedicated to the ruling dynasty by only a few local communities. We see in French's catalogue that the last milestones of Asia Minor were indeed very rare, both in time and space, and resulted from the personal involvement of two governors of the same province, the second of them apparently following the example of his predecessor. Devoid of any practical utility since they mentioned neither destination nor distance, these milestones merely displayed an isolated act of allegiance from a governor to an emperor. But however anecdotal they may appear, these last milestones expressed once again the undisputed authority of Rome in Asia Minor.

---

<sup>36</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 24.4-5.

<sup>37</sup> Hild - Hellenkemper 1990, vol. 1, 129.

<sup>38</sup> Belke 1998, 276-279; Belke 2010, 49-50. See also Külzer 2018A, 84-85; Külzer 2018B.

<sup>39</sup> Belke 2008, 305.

<sup>40</sup> French 2012-2016, vol. 3.5, 207-209, no 114; 212-213, no 117 (and hypothetically 66-67, no 017(F) on the road between Pergamum and Smyrna). See also Hild 2014, 14, no 7; 16, no 14.1.

<sup>41</sup> French 2012-2016, vol. 3.5, 281-282, no 159.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 221, no 119.

<sup>43</sup> Blümel 1995, 39; *Bull. ép.* 1998, no 647; Hild 2014, 13-14, no 3.



**Bibliography**

- Banza 1999 E. Banza, *I miliari come fonte topografica e storica. L'esempio della XI regio (Transpadana) e delle Alpes Cottiae*, Roma 1999.
- Barnes 1982 T. D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London 1982.
- Barnes 1993 T. D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius. Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London 1993.
- Bekker-Nielsen 2012 T. Bekker-Nielsen, *Roads, Roman Empire*, *Encyclopedia of Ancient History* 10, 2012, 5852-5857.
- Belke 1998 K. Belke, *Von der Pflasterstrasse zum Maultierpfad? Zum kleinasiatischen Wegenetz in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit*, in: *Η Βυζαντινή Μικρά Ασία*, Athens 1998, 267-284.
- Belke 2008 K. Belke, *Communications, Roads and Bridges*, in: E. Jeffreys – J. Haldon – R. Cormack (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, Oxford 2008, 295-308.
- Belke 2010 K. Belke, *Verkehrsmittel und Reise- bzw. Transportgeschwindigkeit zu Lande im Byzantinischen Reich*, in: E. Kislinger – J. Koder – A. Külzer (eds.), *Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege. Aspekte der Warenversorgung im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. bis 15. Jahrhundert)*, Wien 2010, 45-57.
- Blümel 1995 W. Blümel, *Inschriften aus Karien 1*, *Epigraphica Anatolica* 25, 1995, 35-64.
- Burgess 2008 [2014] R. W. Burgess, *The Summer of Blood. The "Great Massacre" of 337 and the Promotion of the Sons of Constantine*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 62, 2008, p. 5-51, reprinted in Id., *Chronicles, Consuls, and Coins: Historiography and History in the Later Roman Empire*, Farnham-Burlington 2011, X.
- Chevallier 1997 R. Chevallier, *Les voies romaines*, 2nd ed., Paris 1997.
- Cuneo 1997 P. O. Cuneo, *La legislazione di Costantino II, Costanzo II e Costante (337-361)*, Milan 1997.
- Destephen 2016A S. Destephen, *Le voyage impérial dans l'Antiquité tardive: des Balkans au Proche-Orient*, Paris 2016.
- Destephen 2016B S. Destephen, *La naissance de Constantinople et la fin des voyages impériaux (IV<sup>e</sup>-V<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, *Antiquité Tardive* 24, 2016, 157-169.
- Destephen forthcoming S. Destephen, *From Mobile Centre to Constantinople: the Birth of Byzantine imperial government*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 73, 2019, forthcoming.
- Dilke 1987 O. A. W. Dilke, *Itineraries and Geographical Maps in the Early and Late Roman Empires*, in: J. B. Harley - D. Woodward (eds.), *The History of Cartography 1. Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and Mediterranean*, Chicago-London 1987, 234-257.
- Eck 2004 W. Eck, *Lateinisch, Griechisch, Germanisch...? Wie sprach Rom mit seinen Untertanen?*, in: L. De Ligt – E. A. Hemelrijk – H. W. Singor (eds.), *Roman Rule and Civic Life: Local and regional perspectives*, *Proceedings of the Fourth Workshop of the International Network, Impact of Empire (Roman Empire, c. 200 B. C. - A.D. 476)*, Leiden 2004, 3-19.

- Feissel 2006 D. Feissel, *Les inscriptions latines dans l'Orient protobyzantin*, Akten des XIV. internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie, Vatican-Wien 2006, 99-129.
- French 1980 D. H. French, *The Roman Road-System of Asia Minor*, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II*, 7, 2, 1980, 698-729.
- French 1981 D. H. French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor 1. The Pilgrim's Road*, Oxford 1981.
- French 2012-2016 D. H. French, *Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor 3. Milestones*, 10 vols, Oxford 2012-2016.
- Frye 1983 R. N. Frye, *The Political History of Iran under the Sassanians*, in: E. Yarshater (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran 3.1, The Seleucid, Parthian and Sassanian Periods*, Cambridge 1983, 116-177.
- Greatrex – Lieu 2002 G. Greatrex – S. N. C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars 2. AD 363-628*, London-New York 2002.
- Herrmann 2007 P. Herrmann, *Itinéraires des voies romaines, de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2007.
- Herrmann 2013 K. Herrmann, *Gordian III: Kaiser einer Umbruchszeit*, Speyer 2013.
- Hild 2014 F. Hild, *Meilensteine, Strassen und das Verkehrsnetz der Provinz Karia*, Wien 2014.
- Hild – Hellenkemper 1990 F. Hild – H. Hellenkemper, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 5. Kilikien und Isaurien*, 2 vols., Wien 1990.
- Kelly 2013 C. Kelly (ed.), *Theodosius II. Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 2013.
- Kolb 2004 A. Kolb, *Römische Meilensteine: Stand der Forschung und Probleme*, in: R. Frei-Stolba (ed.), *Siedlung und Verkehr im römischen Reich. Römerstrassen zwischen Herrschaftssicherung und Landschaftsprägung*, Bern 2004, 135-155.
- König 1970 I. König, *Die Meilensteine der Gallia Narbonensis*, Bern 1970.
- König 1973 I. König, *Zur Dedikation römischer Meilensteine*, *Chiron* 3, 1973, 419-427.
- Külzer 2018A A. Külzer, *The Late Antique and Byzantine Road-Network in Western Anatolia: some additions to a widely ramified system*, *STD* 27, 1, April 2018, 83-95.
- Külzer 2018B A. Külzer, *Roads and Routes in Western Phrygia in Late Antiquity*, in: C. Şimşek – T. Kaçar (eds.), *The Lykos Valley and Neighbourhood in Late Antiquity*, Istanbul 2018, 55-65.
- Lafaye 1877 G. Lafaye, *Milliarium*, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines III*, 2, 1877, 1897-1899.
- Laurence 2004 R. Laurence, *Milestones, Communications, and Political Stability*, in: L. Ellis – F. L. Kidner (eds.), *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity: sacred and profane*, Aldershot 2004, 41-58.
- Maraval 2013 P. Maraval, *Les fils de Constantin*, Paris 2013.
- Marek 2015 C. Marek, *Epigraphy and the provincial organisation of Paphlagonian cities in the Roman Empire*, in: K. Winther-Jacobsen – L. Summerer (eds.),

- Landscape Dynamics and Settlement Patterns in Northern Anatolia during the Roman and Byzantine Period, Stuttgart 2015, 307-328.
- Millar 2006 F. Millar, A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Blief under Theodosius II 408-450, Berkeley-Los Angeles 2006.
- Mrozewicz 2004 L. Mrozewicz, Via et imperium. Strassenbau und Herrschaft in römischer Welt, in: R. Frei-Stolba (ed.), Siedlung und Verkehr im römischen Reich. Römerstrassen zwischen Herrschaftssicherung und Landschaftsprägung, Bern 2004, 345-359.
- Pekáry 1968 T. Pekáry, Untersuchungen zu den römischen Reichsstrassen, Bonn 1968.
- Pergami 1993 F. Pergami, La legislazione di Valentiniano e Valente 364-375, Milano 1993.
- Potter 2004 D. S. Potter, The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180-395, London-New York 2004.
- Rathmann 2006 M. Rathmann, Der Statthalter und die Verwaltung der Reichsstraßen in der Kaiserzeit, in: A. Kolb (ed.), Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis. Konzepte, Prinzipien und Strategien der Administration im römischen Kaiserreich, Berlin 2006, 201-259.
- Salama 1987 P. Salama, Bornes milliaires d'Afrique proconsulaire. Un panorama historique du Bas Empire romain, 2nd ed., Rome 1987.
- Schmidt-Hofner 2008 S. Schmidt-Hofner, Die Regesten der Kaiser Valentinian und Valens in den Jahren 364 bis 375 n. Chr., ZRG 125, 2008, 498-602.
- Schneider 1935 K. Schneider, Miliarium, Realencyclopädie, Supplementband 6, 1935, col. 395-431.
- Schneider 1982 H. -C. Schneider, Altstraßenforschung, Darmstadt 1982.
- Seeck 1919 [1984] O. Seeck, Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr. Vorarbeit zu einer Prosopographie der christlichen Kaiserzeit, Stuttgart 1919, repr. Munich 1984.
- Talbert 2010 R. J. A. Talbert, Rome's World: The Peutinger Map Reconsidered, Cambridge 2010.
- Walser 1967 G. Walser, Die römischen Strassen in der Schweiz 1. Die Meilensteine, Bern 1967.
- Walser 1983 G. Walser, Die römischen Strassen und Meilensteine in Raetien, Stuttgart 1983.
- Wilkes 2008 J. Wilkes, Imperial Movements, A.D. 193-337, in: A. K. Bowman – P. Garnsey – A. Cameron (eds.), The Cambridge Ancient History 12. The Crisis of Empire, A.D. 193-337, 2nd ed., Cambridge 2008, 714-723.

### Küçük Asya'nın Geç Dönem Miltaşları

#### Özet

Merhum David Henry French tarafından yakın zamanda edisyonu yapılan ve Ankara'daki İngiliz Enstitüsü tarafından online ortama konulan etkileyici miltaşları corpus'u, Geç Cumhuriyet'ten Geç İmparatorluk Dönemi'ne kadar Roma yolları boyunca dikilmiş 1200'den fazla taşın derinlemesine ve kapsamlı bir bilgisini sunmaktadır. Miltaşları, Roma dünyasının gücünün en yaygın epigrafik görünümü olsa da, modern aktiviteler onları yok etme eğilimindedir ve sonuç olarak onlar ortadan kaybolmadan bu kalıntıları toplamak her zamankinden daha acil bir durumdur. Bu makale, miltaşlarının

dengesiz coğrafik ve kronolojik yayılımını incelemektedir. Bunlar, hemen hemen tüm Küçük Asya boyunca dağılmış görünmektedir ve temel olarak Anadolu platosunun kuzey batı bölümünde yoğunlaşmıştır. Ayrıca, birçoğu Geç Antik Çağ'da, özellikle de geç 3. yüzyıl ile erken 4. yüzyıl arasında, yani Diocletianus'dan Constantinus'a kadar geçen dönemde yapılmış, kazınmış ve sık sık yeniden kullanılmıştır. Bu iki imparator, Küçük Asya'da nadiren seyahat etmesine rağmen bu yolla aşırı şekilde temsil edilmişlerdir. Bölgede bulunan Geç Antik Dönem miltaşları hakkında yapılan çalışmaya göre, bir yöneticinin gelişiyle miltaşlarının artması arasında yakın bir ilişki mevcuttu. Bu miltaşları, yalnızca yeni bir imparatorun onuruna yerel topluluklar tarafından dikilen hanedanlığına ait eserlerdi. Bu sebepten pratik amacını kaybederek 6. yüzyılın başında tamamıyla Küçük Asya'dan kayboldular.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* miltaşları; Anadolu boyunca anayol; Tetrarkhi; Constantinus; Theodosius Hanedanlığı; Geç Antik Dönem.

### **The Late Milestones of Asia Minor**

#### **Abstract**

The impressive corpus of milestones recently edited by the late David Henry French and set online by the British Institute at Ankara provides an extensive and in-depth knowledge of more than 1200 stones erected alongside the Roman roads of Asia Minor from the late Republic to the Later Empire. Even if milestones were the commonest epigraphic display of power in the Roman world, modern activity tends to obliterate them, and consequently it was more than urgent to collect the remains before they vanish. This paper studies the unbalanced geographical and chronological distribution of milestones. They seem to be more or less scattered throughout Asia Minor, but they are mainly concentrated in the north-western part of the Anatolian plateau. Besides most of them were built, inscribed or frequently reused in Late Antiquity, especially between the late third century and the early fourth century, that is from Diocletian to Constantine, both emperors overrepresented in this medium although they rarely journeyed in Asia Minor. According to the study of late milestones found in the region, it did exist a close relation between the advent of a ruler and the multiplication of milestones, which had merely become dynastic monuments erected by local communities in honour of a new emperor. For this reason, they lost any practical purpose and completely disappeared from Asia Minor at the beginning of the sixth century.

*Keywords:* milestones; Transanatolian highway; Tetrarchy; Constantine; Theodosian dynasty; Late Antiquity.