

*Research*

BORDERS AND BORDER ZONES: DIFFERENCES AND EQUALITIES

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## **IMPERIAL LIMES – PROJECTIONS IN MEDIEVAL IMPERIAL IDEA**

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**Abstract.** Roman imperial limes from I - V BC was the first state border in world history, which in some sense corresponds to the modern concept of political boundary. It represents sustainable political, military and economic barrier between the Romans and the rest of the world. With minor modifications it retains their basic strategic concept during the period as expressed from the emperors Augustus and Tiberius. Limes become powerful barrier that separates cultural Roman Hellenistic world of the wild barbarian but at the same time limits the constructed infrastructure of roads, forts and towns became a natural cultural, commercial and political mediator between these two initially hostile worlds. In border towns developed a lively trade between Romans and barbarians. Roman traders penetrate inside the barbarian lands getting to know their culture and history. Studying foreign peoples and countries they convey information gathered imperial legate of the Roman population. The same process was developed and of course in the opposite direction.

Exchange of information on the other promotes mutual understanding and open living on both sides of the Roman Limes.

*Keywords:* Roman Hellenistic world, Roman Limes, border, border zones, Barbarians, I - V BC

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The use of the term limes required to briefly explain its genesis. During the Roman Republic period V - I century BC the Limes is a country road that move goods from Roman villas to the market. In many cases these roads act and land borders between individual farms.

After the defeat of Antony and the conquest of Egypt in 30 BC, Octavian Augustus actually took control of the entire territory of the Roman state. In the period 30-27 BC he successfully solves the problem of the gradual transformation of his power from exceptional in ordinary and started 27 BC the progressive structure of the new form of state organization defined in modern historiography the term Principate. One of the most important elements of this new model is potestarian military infrastructure of the empire. In the period 27-15 BC most Roman legions were located in the border provinces (Junkelmann, 1986, pp. 99–103). In these new places of permanent deployment, they began to build at first temporary and later permanent camps (Hanel, 2007, pp. 410–414). In order to improve communication between the different camps of the legions they relate to roads (Mann, 1974), which over time turned into an entire network of roads extending along the entire border and areas immediately behind it (Rabold et al., 2000). Gradually this road infrastructure is deployed in depth and began to be used for logistical purposes in order to supply the troops with supplies and everything they need (Roth, 2000, pp. 707–710; Kehne, 2007), facilitating commercial contacts and transfer of goods traded between the Romans and their neighbors (Herz, 2002).

Once developed road infrastructure imperial borders became one of the main factors determining the organizing and for life time limits they begin to be labeled with the term "limes" (Luttwak, 1976).

Problems associated with the emergence and development of the imperial limes are subject to analysis and discussion in the scientific literature since the XIX century this long period has accumulated vast empirical material in the result of the excavations. Parallel series of generations of researchers exploring, collecting and detailed study classical narrative tradition that is relevant to the limes, as a military, strategic, commercial, cultural and etnonimik phenomenon (Whittaker, 1994). In many of the studies especially those published in recent decades actively using interdisciplinary methods, allowing the analysis to rise to a qualitatively new level (Elton, 1996).

The idea of a fortified boundary that clearly marks the dividing line between their foreign territories and first appeared during the reign of Augustus. In the beginning it was only a vague strategic concept that is gradually becoming a reality with experience in management, especially defense of the vast empire.

Throughout their self-management of 30 BC - 14 AD. Octavian proclaims the idea of empire without borders "imperium sine fine", but forced by the limited military resources and strategic capabilities of Rome gradually oriented towards defensive strategy within reach already by the Romans territorial parameters.

This new strategic concept, which in August has not yet been realized, and is conducted largely under pressure from the concrete reality can be defined with the Latin phrase "*intra terminos imperii*" (Tac., Ann., I, 11, 4) . This inconsistent strategy pursued under the pressure of circumstances becomes a state policy in the next emperor Tiberius Caesar Augustus ruled from 14 to 37. He finally geared to the termination of external wars of aggression

and targeted starts fortified imperial borders by building them a system of fortifications and roads connecting them (Mattern, 1999, p. 115).

The first such limit is established by the Parthia in 20 BC. Augustus concludes extremely beneficial to the Romans peace with the State of Arsacid. Under the terms of the peace treaty the ruler of the party returned all captured Roman military insignia and surviving Roman prisoners of war, which in fact is recognized for winning the diplomatic struggle. As a result of agreements reached between the border Pax Romana and the state of Orod IV is established on the Euphrates. This river during one extended period became the basis of the imperial eastern limes. In fact Euphrates is border between the Romans and Parthians since 63 BC. After the establishment of the province of Syria by Gnaeus Pompey. After peace from 20 BC. began systematic fortification of this imperial limes and perception of the Euphrates as a constant on which will be built imperial border in the east (Millar, 1993, p. 33).

The first serious attempt to change the eastern limes by the Romans was made almost 130 AD years later and ended with complete failure. Troops of Emperor Marcus Ulpius Trajan during AD 114–117, fight in many battles and conquered the Parthians and most of Mesopotamia (Braund, 1984, p. 20, 173). They reach the Gulf waters, which the emperor symbolically immerses his sword as a sign that these lands were conquered by the Romans by force of arms. Roman success is fleeting. Behind Win troops burst insurrections mainly among the Jewish Diaspora including those remote from the theater cities like Alexandria and Cyrenaica (Fuks, 1953). These riots and the resulting instability in the rear of Roman legions, which are forced to begin a retreat and withdraw from most of the conquered territories in Mesopotamia (Fuks, 1961). His successor, Emperor Hadrian made peace with the Parthia that actually restores the status quo before the start of military operations and the empire actually waives all conquered territories (Isaac, 1990, p. 52).

Experience of Trajan shows that the Euphrates is natural limes between the two great empires in the East Front (Isaac, 1990, p. 30). Meanwhile, the rebellion of the Jewish Diaspora, which is most interested in maintaining peace along the border and trade development, demonstrates the importance of the Roman Limes population on both sides of the border and even hundreds of miles inland (Millar, 1993, pp. 99–106). Strong economic Jewish diaspora in the period I - II century has both Roman and Parthian territory and it is the most affected by the outbreak of armed conflict, which is why react so strongly revolted against the Romans (Isaac, 1990, p. 152–160).

The situation changed to a certain extent during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Parthia in anticipation of conflict between the two coemperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus begin offensive against Roman Euphrates limes. Romans react immediately to the east and sent significant military effectives placed under the nominal command of Emperor Lucius Verus, actually led by Audius Cassius and Statius Priscus some of the most experienced strategists of the empire. They were able to quickly organize a counter-offensive in the course of which legions in several major engagements defeated the Parthians and even captured one of their capitals Ctesiphon. Romans ended their offensive due erupted in Mesopotamia epidemic that began decimating their ranks. As a result of the war with a Parthia of AD 161-165, the Rome conquered and took control of a number of territories in northern Mesopotamia to the east of the Euphrates, although transmission in some areas of the border east of the river, it remains the backbone of the Roman defensive strategy in the region and a key strategic and communication artery for transportation of troops and merchandise (Wheeler, 2007). In this case the Romans encountered so organized resistance by the Jewish diaspora because she has suffered a blow as a result of the defeat of the uprising led by Bar Kohba – 132 – 135 AD, and is not an organized and powerful force on both sides of the Roman Limes. Their place was taken by Arab tribes inhabiting the territories

on both sides of the border and mostly fast growing and dial power and wealth city of Palmyra in North Syria, through which the most caravans with merchandise passing in either direction in Limes Euphraticus (Young, 2001, pp. 53–57). Roman territorial gains in northern Mesopotamia have been strengthened as a result of military campaigns organized by Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus against the Parthians 198 – 199 on in the third century with the advent of new eastern Sassanid empire that destroys and replaces the Parthia conflicts of Limes Euphraticus and frequent are conducted with varying success, but despite the difficulties faced by the Romans, they manage to keep the Euphrates as the foundation of the Roman Limes.

Limes Euphraticus experienced the fall of the Western Roman Empire and gradually transformed into one of the main and most important frontiers of Byzantine Empire (Howard-Johnston, 1995). Passed through its main trading turnover of the new empire successor to the Eastern Roman Empire. This region has become a major generator of new ideas in the spiritual sphere, mainly in terms of the emergence and development of new religious doctrines, which intertwine and develop symbiotic elements of Christianity, Zoroastrianism and survivors of the ancient east neoplatonic philosophies. Among these new religious denominations can be given without exhaustive Manichaeism and the Paulicians. From west to east in Sasanian Iran and Central Asia quickly spread Nestorian, which reached even to the north of China and became the state religion of the Uyghur Khaganate. Origin and development of these religions is largely favored by Efratskiya limes because their adepts continuous transition from one or the other side of the border, depending on the specific situation, ie whether they pursue the Romans or the Persians

Rhineland limes also has played a important role in the development of the Pax Romana and succeeded in medieval countries in Western Europe. Its structure began under Emperor Augustus. After a period of aggressive policy aimed at the Roman conquest of the territories inhabited by Germanic tribes

between the Rhine and the Elbe lasted from 15 BC to 9 AD imperial government gradually orient with some fluctuations to download the legions west of the Rhine and its transformation within the empire by independent Germanic tribes (Mattern, 1999, pp. 78–81). The turning point was the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, which romans lost three legions and significant counts auxiliary troops. In fact in this battle germans are commanded by Arminius destroyed half the roman army located on the Rhine. The news for defeating causes panic in Rome and Augustus dissolve his german guards for fear of riots in Rome. Octavian's defeat shows that aggressive policy against the Germans and he was doomed to be oriented defense strategy is based on building a defensive boundary line along the Rhine (Bechert & Willems, 1982).

This policy was continued and developed by Emperor Tiberius, heir of Octavian. Despite some hesitation he finally goes to defense strategy. In the first few years of his reign the new princeps organized several military campaigns in lands located between the Rhine and the Elbe under the command of his adopted son Germanicus Julius Caesar. It is questionable whether they are aimed at the conquest of territories attacked or military demonstration aimed at intimidating and punishing the Germans for their legions rebellion soon after the death of Octavian. In 17 AD Germanicus was pulled from the Rhine limes and finally the empire goes from aggressive to defensive strategy.

Constructed by the German limes camps of the legions "castra" gradually turning into major cities. Some of them survived the end of the Western Roman Empire and continue to exist in the Middle Ages. As examples not exhaustive can be identified: Cologne, ancient Colonia Agrippinen, Trier, the ancient Augusta Treverorum, Mainz, ancient Mogontiacum, Xanten and ancient Castra Vetera. They all arise as camps legions or auxiliary troops and subsequently became one of the largest cities in the Roman Gallic and German provinces (Alföldy, 1968). They are proof of the positive role played by

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In support of this thesis may be indicated poem "Mosella" of late Roman poet Decimus Magnus Ausonius, born of Gaul, published in AD 371, in which it he praised the Roman way of life along the Moselle, which is part of the Rhine limes (Ternes, 1975). Describes the picturesque and rich Roman villas located along the river, which develops Roman civilization in these parts. Interest is the author himself. Ausonius the mid-municipal Gallic aristocracy in the fourth century is among the most ardent advocates of the preservation of the Pax Romana (Sivan, 1993).

It is a close associate of Emperor Valentinian I ruled from 364 to 375, and his son Emperor Gratian ruled from 375 to 383, the Emperor Valentinian attracts Ausonius who is known for speaker tutor to his son Gratian. At the time in which he wrote his poem "Mosella" Ausonius appointed by Valentinian a senior position in the palace. In managing its graduate Gratian, Gallic orator was elevated to the position of one of the most influential politicians in the Western Roman Empire, and his son, son in law and nephew also occupy senior positions in government mainly in Gallic prefecture. This brief excursus on Ausonius shows that he is part of official authority in the empire, defend and carry out its ideological goals. In this connection it may be assumed



that the emperor of the Western Roman Empire perceive Rhine limes as the basis of civilization and the Roman power in Gaul, which is confirmed by the fact that in the second half of the fourth century emperors resided most of the time in Trier. This confirms beyond doubt the thesis that the Western Roman Empire Rhine limes is the most important.

Rhine limes has influenced the development of the ethnogenesis of the Germanic tribes. Clashes of the Romans in the lower reaches of the Rhine with various Germanic tribes led to the emergence in the region of wandering troops do not belong to any tribe. By the time they settled near the Roman Limes and form their own tribal organization in the third century would become known as the Franks. Same as those in the last two centuries of the existence of the imperial Rhine frontier will play a major role in its history and destruction. The chiefs of these tribes from the Merovingian dynasty subsequently invade the Gallic provinces, and their descendants from the Carolingian Dynasty will control the majority of the former Western Roman provinces and the real Germany. They somewhat realize the idea of August to merge in one of Gaul and Germany under the rule of the Romans, with the difference that in this case they are united under the rule of the Franks no small part to the emergence of that ethnic map of Germany has just Rhine limes.

Rhine in the next centuries continues to act as a border between countries in the Middle Ages, but it is also a link between them. It is the main dividing line between France and Germany in the Middle Ages. At the same time it continued to transport goods and in fact for centuries it is the main transport artery that carries goods from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. Thus, the river continues to play the role of ambivalent factor in the lives of the people of Western Europe during the Middle Ages, it connects them and splits to both of the Roman Empire.

The third imperial limes, but not least is the Danube limes. In fact it is the longest Roman limes in time is formed last. Was finally completed at the

end of the first century after Christ. At the beginning of the second century it was enlarged by the Emperor Marcus Ulpius Trajan north of the lower Danube with the conquest of Dacia and its transformation into a Roman province. This strategic move to one of the greatest Roman emperors still remains controversial (Braund, 1984, p. 98). Conquest of the Dacians and the withholding of their lands under Roman rule cost the empire too much military and economic resources. In the third century crisis withholding province Dacia becomes almost impossible task for the emperors in Rome provided the empire actually breaks down into three (Loriot & Nomy, 1997). In the western Roman provinces formed after 260 AD, the Gallic Empire, which covers Gallic, Spanish, British and German provinces, including the Rhine limes (Birley, 1981). Eastern part of the empire falls under the rule of palmyrian Septimius Odenatus, actually under his control and turns Euphrates limes.

Gallienus, the legitimate emperor in Rome effectively controls only the Danube limes and just legions of him becoming the backbone of the troops commanded by Aurelian one of his successors restored the unity of the empire. In fact, during the third quarter of the third century just Danube limes played a key role in preserving and restoring the unity of the Roman Empire, which conclusively demonstrates its importance to its survival. Emperor Aurelian, who restored the empire is aware that the defense of the Dacian provinces north of the Danube is an impossible task, and in 272 AD, the orders of the Roman army and population to evacuate these provinces and to withdraw south of the river, so the river again became a major dividing line between the Pax Romana and the barbarian tribes.

On Danube limes starts beginning of the end for the Roman Empire and ancient world as a whole. In 376 AD Emperor Valens allows the Huns, Goths fleeing to pass the Danube and settle in the diocese of Thrace. This political move of the Emperor proved a huge strategic mistake with disastrous consequences for the Roman world. Goths fail to adapt to the conditions for

settlement, which provides them the Empire and began plundering Roman provinces of Moesia Interior and Scythia Minor. Located near imperial forces began military operations against them, but they ended in defeat for the Romans, who were forced to withdraw south of the Balkan Mountains. Experience of Emperor Valens to correct the error leads to new crash ended with the Battle of Adrianople - 9 August 378 .Goths commanded by Fritigern defeated and destroyed the troops responsible for the defense of the Danube limes.

Rome was not able to sort of suffering incurred defeat. Over the next decade the new emperor Theodosius the Great in Constantinople managed to stabilize the situation somewhat in the Balkans, but this success has been achieved using mainly Gothic mercenary detachments. In the V century Eastern Roman Empire gradually managed to regain control of the Danube limes, but finally this process is completed after the death of Attila the Hun and the disintegration of his ephemeral "empire" in the middle of the same century. Danube limes along with Limes Euphraticus became the most important imperial limes of the new Roman Empire. It survived to the mass migration of the Slavs south of the Danube during the reign of Emperor Phocas in the first decade of the seventh century. The collapse of this limes actually fix the end of Late Antiquity and the beginning of a new era, highlighted in the historiography of the term middle ages, suggesting its transitional character between ancient and modern times.

The Romans created the first stable borders in Europe. These limits more or less will become a model for subsequent state formation in the Middle Ages, and why not in modern times. Roman concept of a stable with time-invariant boundary line, which also becomes the area for exchanging ideas and generating new ones, development of road infrastructure and business contacts in the Middle Ages survived course with significant transformations and transfer even in modern times. Border separates and connects.

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