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## THE CITIES OF THE IAZYGIANS

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*Abstract:* Ptolemy's description of the Iazygian territory (*Geogr. hyph.* III 7) describes eight 'poleis' – which could be any kind of settlement indeed by name, and the boundaries of the region. The boundaries can be traced from the Greater Fatra range in the north to the river Temes or Krassó in the south, but the position of the settlements allows for some variations, taking as a fix point Partiskon = Szeged, from where a probable trade route started to the north or northwest, reaching most of the settlements mentioned. If the direction of the route in Ptolemy's map were correct, some localities were outside of the actual territory (A), but supposing two different kinds of distortion, we may reconstruct a route heading to the Zagyva–Tarna region (B) or to Aquincum (C). Both possibilities seem realistic, but the most important settlement in the first part of the 1st c. was Bormanon (according to *Geogr. hyph.* VIII 11). The etymology of the name points to a warm or/and medicinal water spring. This fact and the date makes the B the most probable version.

*Keywords:* Ptolemy, Iazyges Metanastae, trade routes, Bormanon.

The Iazygians, this Sarmatian people inhabited the plains east from the Danube since about 20 AD<sup>1</sup> – therefore they were more correctly said *Iazyges Metanastae*,<sup>2</sup> transmigrated Iazygians –, where they are well known from the archaeological sources. On the contrary, they seem not to have had their own literacy, authors did not mention it, nor do we have epigraphic relics which were connected with them (although it was not necessarily they could not form a writing system of their own, while at least one of their closely relative peoples, namely the Alanians, had their writing according to some Eastern sources).<sup>3</sup> Consequently, every piece of verbal information about the Iazygians, including names, comes from Greek or Roman authors. That is the reason for the ambivalent situation that while we can clearly distinguish where the Iazygians had lived, based on their archaeological inheritance, their habitations are deprived

<sup>1</sup> For the exact date, see note 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ptol., *Geogr. hyph.* III 7, 1; *Geogr. Exp. Comp.* 4, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Andronicus, *Descriptio populorum et plagarum*. In: *Chronica minora* II. CSCO 3. SS 3. 278-280, *Chronicon ad a. Chr. 1234 pertinens*, versio: I-B. Chabot, CSCO 109. SS 56. Louvain 1965, 32.

of their names, in spite of the fact that there remained some Iazygian settlement names – with the words of the Greek geographic writers, *polis* names.

Naturally we cannot speak about a rich treasure of Iazygian geographic names, there are in fact, only two sources which speak, if not abundantly, yet in considerable length about the inner relations of the Iazygian territory. One of them is Ammianus Marcellinus, whose famous sections give us a description of natural geography, obscure enough, apart from a few informations on social structures and leading personalities.<sup>4</sup> The other one is Ptolemy's *Geōgraphikē hyphēgēsis*, the only scientific geographic description.<sup>5</sup> Earlier geographic writers save for Pliny, do not mention the Metanastae, the transmigrated Sarmatian tribe, which settled in the Carpathian Basin.<sup>6</sup> That is quite natural: Strabo or Agrippa were active in a time closely *before* the Iazygian migration, and even those working in the 1st c., as Pomponius Mela, used mostly earlier information (except Pliny). We cannot judge those writers whose oeuvre was lost, of course we cannot know with certainty what the knowledge of Marinus was in the second part of the 1st c. Yet Ptolemy is generally supposed to preserve many data from Marinus,<sup>7</sup> and therefore the first geographic source which has to be considered on the Iazygian territory in the Carpathian Basin is Marinus. As for Pliny, he only gave the two opposing boundaries of the Sarmatian settlement area in the earliest period.<sup>8</sup>

Later geographic writers generally use Ptolemy as a source for this region, or sometimes even epitomizing him.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, Ptolemy is the sole writer who systematically describes the Iazygian territory (*Geogr. hyph.* III 7) in such a manner:

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<sup>4</sup> Amm. Marc. XVII 13.

<sup>5</sup> Claudii Ptolemaei *Geographia*, ed. C. F. A. Nobbe, Lipsiae 1898. (repr. Hildesheim 1966), Claudii Ptolemaei *Geographia*, ed. C. Müller, Paris 1883.

<sup>6</sup> Plin., *Nat.* IV 80–81.

<sup>7</sup> For the argumentation pro and contra see Polaschek 1965, 687-690; I shall present ampler evidence later on in the article.

<sup>8</sup> Since the text is somewhat problematic and the names are partly unidentifiable, these boundaries are not quite unambiguous: on one hand a river in the northwestern plainland of the Carpathian Basin, probably close to Carnuntum, on the other hand the river Tisza. Moreover, already at the end of the 1st c. these data were not necessarily up to date; they are dated before Vannius' taking over of power, that is, before 20 AD, and that is the strictest chronological definition of the Sarmatian transmigration (see Mócsy 1977, Nagy 1989, 66-68, P. Kovács in FPA I 51–52.)

<sup>9</sup> *Geographiae expositio compendiaris* (GGM II 494–511) 4, 11 and 9, 28; Zacharias rhetor, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII 7 (ed. E. W. Brooks, CSCO 83-84, SS 38-39); Iacob Edessenus, *Hexaameron* III (ed. a. Vaschalde, CSCO 92. SS 44, Louvain 1953) p. 112-113. – I mention only those who know more than just the *name* of the Iazyges.

The Transmigrated Iazygians border in the north upon the above mentioned part of the European Sarmatia, from the southern edge of the Sarmatian Mountains to the Carpathian Mountains, in the west and in the south upon the above mentioned part of Germania from the Sarmatian Mountains to the bend of the River Danube near Karpis, and the subsequent reach of the River Danube, which extends to the mouth of the River Tibiscus, which flows to the north. The position of the mouth has the co-ordinates [long] 46° [lat] 44°15'. In the east upon Dacia along the same River Tibiscus, which turns to east and ends by the Carpathian Mountains, wherefrom it rises too; its position has the co-ordinates [long] 46° [lat] 48°30'.

The cities (poleis) among the Transmigrated Iazyges are these:

Uskenon	43°15'	48°20'
Bormanon	43°40'	48°15'
Abiēta	43°40'	48°
Trisson	44°10'	47°45'
Parka	43°30'	47°40'
Kandanon	44°	47°20'
Pession	44°40'	47°
Partiskon	45°	46°40'

How can this area be determined on a current map? (See fig. 1.)

In the north, the boundary of the Iazygian land ran approximately from the Danube-bend to the Sarmatian Mountains, which can be placed, according to Ptolemy's description, between [long] 42°30'–43°30' [lat] 48°30'–50°30'.<sup>10</sup> If we compare these co-ordinates with those of the known right-bank landmarks in Pannonia Inferior,<sup>11</sup> the south-western edge of the range must be put to approx. 18°45'–19°5' E, 48°35'–45' N.<sup>12</sup> In a modern map, it corresponds approximately to the edge of the Greater Fatra range. Its extension to the East is probably vague even for an approximation, because hardly any E-W road ran through it, which could have been a base for it. The most logical construction seems to be extend it to the eastern edge of the modern Ércheğység (so-called Ore Mountains). Here there is a source which is even more profuse than Ptolemy, the anonymous *Geographiae expositio compendiaris*, which refers: *They say the highest ones are in Europe the Sarmatian Mountains and the Alps;*<sup>13</sup> if it is

<sup>10</sup> Ptol., *Geogr. hyph.* II 10, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. FPA I 99-101, tables 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> As I shall argue later on, the approximate position data in the Barbaricum must be generally connected to routes which start from the Empire, therefore this mountain probably is to be correlated with the starting point of one of the S-N routes; the odds are for Solva (via the river Granua) or maybe for Aquincum, and not for Cirpi, which is closest in terms of co-ordinates, but unsuitable as the initials of a route because of the mountaneous terrain. For Ptolemy's positions of Solva and Aquincum, see FPA I 96 in greater detail.

<sup>13</sup> *Geogr. Exp. Comp.* 9, 28. Cf. FPA I 109.

true, certainly the High Tatra range was part of the Sarmatian Mountains too.<sup>14</sup> It is surprising that the lesser ranges south-west from the Fatra were not parts of this range in the view of the antiquity; it is possible that they are not mentioned here because they were belonging to Germania unambiguously.<sup>15</sup> Anyway, it is likely that the political boundaries between the Iazygians and the Germans were set somewhere from the reach of the Danube between Solva and Cirpi to the feet of the Fatra, and from there they ran approximately eastwards.

The northern neighbours of the Iazygians were, according to Ptolemy, the non-transmigrated Sarmatians from the Sarmatian Mountains to the North-Eastern Carpathians, the co-ordinates of which are proper enough, compared to the former ones. These were, we may say more correctly, faraway Barbarians of an almost indeterminable ethnicity. It is apparently due to the lack of information, that he draws the boundary line straight. There are some interpretation problems with the eastern boundary – which I omit for the most part, because it is connected with the geography of the province Dacia –, since the geographic description of the boundary river Tibiskos is highly self-contradictory. The co-ordinates of its mouth refer to the modern river Temes, according to Müller,<sup>16</sup> but I am not unwilling to put it even more eastwards, to the river Krassó, based on Ptolemy's position data,<sup>17</sup> but its spring refer unambiguously to the River Tisza. In antiquity the Tisza was named naturally Pa(r)thisos,<sup>18</sup> but Ptolemy did not use this name. Only a longer analysis could make it clear why he made the error, which were the data he based upon, and what his opinion was on the Dacian-Iazygian boundary.

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<sup>14</sup> The *Geographiae expositio compendiaria* epitomizes mostly Ptolemy (who of course cannot be the ultimate source of this sentence) and Protagoras (from the 2nd-3rd c. AD), who himself was mostly relying on others, among whose it is quite possible that there were more recent descriptions than that of Ptolemy.

<sup>15</sup> Sources on the Regnum Vannianum (see note 8), compared to archaeological data, give a generally accepted view that it was prolonged to the east to the river Vág at least (cf. *Jazigok* 37). It is not impossible either that we should take the river Garam (Granua) for the boundary.

<sup>16</sup> Ed. C. Müller 441. He gives the description of Priskos Rhetor as an analogy, where the rivers follow in the order Tisia, Tibisa, Dricca (the last one being the Maros-Aranka in his view).

<sup>17</sup> The Danube reach east of Sirmium was surveyed from Sirmium, see Fehér 2004, 358. If we start from here, the longitude of the Tibiskos is doubtless close to that of the Temes, but the latitude is far too southwards. Yet the position of the nearby Taurunum stands apart (for the interpretation of this phenomenon, see *FPA* I 94). If we suppose that it belongs to the relics of a supposed older self-standing surveying, and correlate the Tibiskos with it, it appears to be almost exactly in the position of the river Krassó. By the way this point is also mentioned in the interpolation of the ed. Romana of Ptolemy: *divertigium Abisti (sic!) fluvii cum Danubio*, with the same co-ordinates, and it seems realistic that this interpolation contains the debris of an older survey (for the pro and contra arguments see *FPA* I 96. note 33).

<sup>18</sup> Plin., *Nat.* IV 80, Strab., *Geogr.* VII 5, 2, Amm. Marc. XVII 13, 4.

Nevertheless the outer borders of the Iazygian area are more or less exactly definable. The problem of the inner part of the territory is different.

Ptolemy names eight 'poleis' in the Iazygian territory. The first question is why these ones are 'cities'. As for the *Geōgraphikē hyphēgēsis*, it calls every settlement in the provinces *poleis*, but only the lesser part of these were *municipia*; those which were *coloniae*, are sometimes marked especially (for example Mursa),<sup>19</sup> but not always (Savaria, Emona are unmarked). Some so-called 'poleis' are hardly to be taken even as *vici*, they are rather simple road stations.<sup>20</sup> Similarly 'poleis' are mentioned throughout the Barbaricum, even in the furthest part of Germania and Sarmatia. They probably differed in size and significance too. The greater part of them must have been route stations, since the data concerning the Barbaricum came mostly from Romans, especially merchants, travelling in the region.<sup>21</sup> Yet there is a difference from the empire in the sense, that there are relatively few data which cover a very great area, so we may conclude to that he only knows localities of greater importance, as compared to the provinces, and therefore it is more likely that the Barbarian settlements were in fact regional centres.

The localization of the eight Iazygian 'poleis' depends on the question whether they can be connected to a route starting from the Empire. The provincial position data reached Ptolemy probably through the *formae provinciae*, which were based on separate surveyings, and consequently they can be checked against actual data, but with different shifts in each province.<sup>22</sup> Naturally in the Barbaricum all positions are only estimated, as the Roman gromatic could not survey these lands with their gnomons,<sup>23</sup> and consequently few data are given with more accuracy than 1° or 30', while in the Empire and particularly in the Mediterranean parts, frequently there are co-ordinates with 5' difference.<sup>24</sup> An important exception is the land of the Iazyges Metanastae with its more accurate data!

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<sup>19</sup> Ptol., *Geogr. hyph.* II 15, 4. Μουρσία κολωνία.

<sup>20</sup> For example he marks seven 'poleis' by the Dravus route in Pannonia, but only Mursella can be identified with the help of archaeology.

<sup>21</sup> As in the neighbouring Germania Magna, where Simonyi 1948. tried to identify the Ptolemaean localities applying to the trade route through the Quadian territory.

<sup>22</sup> Fehér 2004, 353-356.

<sup>23</sup> *FPA* I 90, about the surveys see *FPA* II 58-59.

<sup>24</sup> It is highly questionable whether they could achieve such exactitude using gnomon. I did some experiments which lead to the observation that one can do the measuring with about 20' accuracy, but naturally I cannot have all the skills an experienced gromatic would have had and learned in the Roman age. But naturally the ancient surveys were based on distance measurements too, which could be transposed to latitudes and longitudes by computation, see Ptol., *Geogr. hyph.* I 2 – naturally only in straight road sections, and the mathematical apparatus of the typical ancient experts was able only to apply it to N-S and W-E sections. Yet theoretically it

If we accept that these data refer to trade routes, it can be easily explained by the fact that here the trade routes started at both ends from the Empire, were relatively short, and therefore a more close distance approximation was possible. Another argument which points to trade routes is that four *'poleis'* from the eight lies doubtless along the same line on the map, which begins in the south with the *'polis'* Partiskon, which has been identified with the Szeged route station for a long time.<sup>25</sup> If we want to transpose the co-ordinates to modern ones, we only have to state whether this route was measured from Pannonia Inferior or Dacia (or, less probably, from Moesia, or earlier from the undivided Pannonia). One problem is that the surveying of Dacia apparently gave a misshapen result (naturally because of the difficulties of measuring the mountainous region), and that Ptolemy used the *forma* of Pannonia Inferior only scarcely, in all probability, but he made use of earlier data from the undivided Pannonia.<sup>26</sup> In terms of latitudes, the co-ordinates of Partiskon and Lugio (Dunaszekcső) are in accord (with the same +25' aberration), and they are probably the starting and middle stations of the same road,<sup>27</sup> in terms of longitudes, there is –20' relative aberration, which can be easily due a mistaken approximation. It is evident that in an approximated measuring, which started from here, the latitudes of the Iazygian localities can be hypothetically explained with the same +25' aberration. What is less evident is how we can interpret the longitudes, since the Pannonian data suffered a serious distortion in longitudes north from Lugio, beginning from Lussonium – they were shifted westward to an increasing extent –, but we do not know whether the data from the Iazyges are synchronous. If they are, they originate from the very era of the Iazygian transmigration, about 20 AD, from the Tiberian era at any rate,<sup>28</sup> but there is no serious reason why they

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could be done in every direction, and Ptolemy (ibid. I 3, 3) said he had constructed the measuring instrument too. In sum, the most exact inner imperial data could derive from exact distance measurements combined with astronomical observations, and the lesser exactitude of the distant regions may be partly due to the fact that distances were given only via approximation; while the exact but evidently wrong data in some inner regions (including Italy) could originate from distance measurements which were mistaken because of the bends and declinations from the N-S/W-E course of the roads.

<sup>25</sup> Cs. Sebestyén 1926, 144 ff. By the way, the name itself shows that Partiskon lay by the River Tisza/Pa(r)tisos; it was localized to the mouth of the Maros at the end of the 19th c. already by C. Müller in his edition of Ptolemy (p. 441), but if there were no archaeological evidence concerning the Szeged station, that would be only a *circulus vitiosus*, since he was led to that idea by the correlation with the co-ordinates of the station Lugio (within the Empire).

<sup>26</sup> *FPA* I 96–97, Fehér 2004, 356–357, note 19.

<sup>27</sup> Fitz 1965, 83, Lakatos 1965, 100–101 without much argumentation; Balla-Tóth 1968, 75–76 upon sound foundations. Recently see *Jazigok* 129.

<sup>28</sup> The data of the limes road of Pannonia Inferior probably issue from the survey of the undivided Pannonia (see note 17), which was separated from Illyricum in the first part of Tiberius'

could not be later than the re-surveying from the initials of the 2nd c., the data of which are almost wholly lost.<sup>29</sup> The latest data from this region are from about 133 by Ptolemy (as the mention of Mursa as a colonia).<sup>30</sup>

If the Pannonian and Iazygian series are contemporaries, probably they have the same distortion of orientation: in the case the Iazygian route was situated probably alongside the Tisza, in the direction N (see fig. 1, variant B); if not, it is more likely that the Iazygian route is not distorted (see fig. 1, variant A), in which case it is directed to NW, probably to Aquincum.<sup>31</sup> The locality Trisson is farther off from the supposed route, it was perhaps in the northern region of the Tisza. Three north-western Iazygian settlements remain, Uskenon, Bormanon, Abiēta; there was only one attempt to identify Uskenon with the modern locality Visk by the river Ipoly,<sup>32</sup> but it is based on an obviously false etymology (although it is quite possible that the most north-western Iazygian ‘city’ was in the region of the Ipoly).

All the same, serious objections can be raised against A as well as against B. We cannot completely abject the longitudinal distortion, because then the ‘*po-leis*’ Parka and Abiēta would be placed *inside* Pannonia. At least about 15’ deviation to the west must be accepted (A\*). Thus Parka and Abiēta lay on the Barbarian side of the river, nearly to a supposable route to Aquincum; the northernmost city Uskenon in the Ipoly region, and Bormanon approx. in the region around the modern Vác. But we cannot theoretically explain such kind of deviation, nor define how it was close to 15’ and permanently the same or not.

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reign, although the actual occupation of the lands up to the Danube perhaps required longer times, and the regulation of the civil administration can be postponed to the Claudian era (see P. Kovács. In: *FPA* I 278–283).

<sup>29</sup> The most significant part of Ptolemy’s datable informations comes from Trajan’s era. It was supposed that it is the chronological layer of Marinus’ geography, see Honigmann 1930, 1768, but it is more likely that Marinus can be dated to the last third of the 1st c. However this layer made use of earlier *Latin* sources too (as seen e.g. from the mistakes of E~F), which are generally supposed to be Agrippa’s map and its completions (Honigmann 1930, 1792-1793). Thus both possible suppositions can be explained in terms of textual history. The only thing which speaks for a later chronology that there are proofs of regular Roman–Sarmatian trade only from the last third of the 1st c. (*Jazigok* 125). If the data on the Barbaricum issue from the merchants’ descriptions, it speaks for that these are not synchronous with the first Pannonian survey but later.

<sup>30</sup> About the deduction of Mursa see *FPA* II 186–187. Steph. Byz. 458, 6., CIL III 3279. 3280=10261. Honigmann 1930, 1768 knows about only three Ptolemaean data from Hadrian’s era, but according to these, it must be corrected.

<sup>31</sup> Certainly existed a route Aquincum–Partiskon; its northern section was identified in the area of Üllő (Soproni 1958, 42; Gabler 1975, 89). Its further course is still dubious, although several attempts were made to precise it: Fitz 1965, 82 (Ladánybene-Kecskemét-Kiskun-félegyháza), near to Partiskon see Lakatos 1965, 101.

<sup>32</sup> Simonyi 1948, 138.

If we hold to the same longitudinal distortion as in Pannonia, without latitudinal distortion, the ‘cities’ are all in an acceptable position, quite visibly along the Tisza, the northern settlements are in the region of the rivers Zagyva and Tarna, and Bormanon is placed far into the east, near the modern Füzesabony.<sup>33</sup> One possible objection is that now we cannot retain the same distances as we see in the Ptolemaean map,<sup>34</sup> in the relation Bormanon–Partiskon the difference is about 60 km, and it is disputable whether it was not too obvious even if they could only approximately estimate. But if we lengthen the road into the same direction, the cities will be less likely to fit into the Tisza–Zagyva region.

There is a possible intermediate variant (C on the map), where we put the localities along the most probable Partiskon–Aquincum route with the same distance measures. Thus Pession would be located cca. into the area of the modern Csongrád, Kandanon to that of Cegléd, and Parka to Üllő (!). The aberration of longitudes is moderate, not too far from that of B. Now the reason for such an aberration is unknown, since it cannot be connected with the Pannonian deviation. Still the position of the ‘cities’ is the least problematic so: if it can be applied to the further ones too, Bormanon must be placed near the modern Szécsény, Uskenon to the northern side of the Ipoly.

What the importance of these eight ‘*poleis*’ was, we cannot guess from Ptolemy’s Book III. These names are *hapax legomena*, all but one which occurs later in Book VIII too, which is a less frequently used and at the same moment less easily usable source, because it was preserved in fewer *codices*, and the text was less examined critically.<sup>35</sup> This book seems to give kind of an epitome of Books II–VII, but following a quite different system: it gives the positions of the most important localities anew, but the latitudes are given by the length of the longest daylight,<sup>36</sup> the longitudes by the difference of the local time from the Alexandria time. Naturally the co-ordinates can be perfectly calculated from these data. The actual relationship to the whole of the work has been much

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<sup>33</sup> In the early Sarmatian era, imported Roman ceramics mark this very route along the Tisza and the region of the Zagyva, see *Jazigok* 129, fig. 2, and the Sarmatians were in fact settled in the 1st c. around Füzesabony (middle Tarna area, near to the hypothetical position of Bormanon/B variant): Farkas Cs., Korai szarmata temető aranyleletes sírjai Füzesabony határától [Graves with gold finds from the early Sarmatian cemetery near Füzesabony]. In: *Jazigok* 67-81.

<sup>34</sup> Where the distances were actually measured, they are mostly acceptable. In the critical section in Pannonia Inferior, in the series Cirpi – Aquincum – Salinum – Mursa they are tolerably correct, but Lugio is seriously mistaken, due to some unknown error. On the contrary, in the lazygian territory, they must have been not measured, but estimated.

<sup>35</sup> Müller’s edition does not contain this book; the textual apparatus of Nobbe’s old edition is almost useless. On the textual criticism of the editions, see A. Diller: Preface. In: C. F. A. Nobbe (ed.): *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, repr. Hildesheim 1966, I–XV.

<sup>36</sup> Giving the time data in ‘equinoctial hours’, i.e. hours of 1/24 day, as we do it today – a very rare method in the antiquity.



disputed: some say it was really an epitome, some that it was an earlier variation, or even the part which clearly retains the construction of Marinus of Tyre, thus being a medium to the knowledge of the world geography of Marinus.<sup>37</sup> Analysing the Pannonian data of this book, I found a decisive argument:<sup>38</sup> it names six important cities from Pannonia, five of which achieved their importance in the first part of the 1st c. (Emona, Poetovio, Scarbantia, Sirmium and Servitium<sup>39</sup>), but before Claudius' era, because it does not mention Savaria. Consequently, Ptolemy uses here older data than in the 'main' books, save for he updates the province arrangement. The exception is Mursa, which comes from his latest chronological layer. For some reason, he found this city of high priority when composing and bringing the book up-to-date. Thus, this book is *not* a simple epitome. That is not a doubtless proof that it was closely depending on Marinus, but its basic layer is datable evidently to the 1st part of the 1st c., and it was accurately adapted to the Ptolemaean system some time after 133.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the aims of this book are also slightly different from the others, since it is undoubtedly shown by the arrangement into *tables*, that it was intended to serve as a companion to a *map*.<sup>41</sup>

The Iazyges are discussed in Book VIII the following way:

*VIII 11. Ninth table of Europe*

*The ninth table of Europe embraces the Transmigrated Iazygians, Dacia, the two Moesias, Thrace and the Chersonese. ... The longest daylight of the Iazygians' (city) Bormanon is 16<sup>h</sup>, its distance from Alexandria is 1<sup>h</sup>5' to the west.*

The 16 hours of longest daylight correspond to the latitude 49°3' (in Book III we read 48°15'), the local time can be calculated only if we know where the measurer started from, formally compared to the Ptolemaean longitude of Alexandria it means 44°15' Ptolemaean longitude instead of the position 43°40' in Book III.

Generally positions in this region are uninterpretable because of innumerable distortions and possible writing mistakes as an exception, but the longitudes of Sirmium and Mursa deviate from those in Book II with +30/40', very like

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<sup>37</sup> Comprehensively see Polaschek 1965, 687–690.

<sup>38</sup> *FPA* I 82–85.

<sup>39</sup> The road from Salona reached our province there.

<sup>40</sup> The 0 time put to Alexandria likewise suggests Ptolemy, but we do not really know where Marinus of Tyre worked, and therefore this could theoretically belong to the former layer too.

<sup>41</sup> It is still debated whether the original edition of Ptolemy contained a map as well, or it was a medieval addition, comprehensively see Toomer 1975, 198.

that of Bormanon. It is possible that these were really measured in a survey of Pannonia Inferior; there is a positive deviation of about 1° from the reality, which is almost natural.<sup>42</sup>

The actual positions may still be dubious, but one thing is sure: there was only one Iazygian settlement of such importance that it was put on a world map, most likely in the 1st half of the 1st c., namely Bormanon. The city network in Book VIII reflects real importance rather than an artificial mechanical disposition. From Italy nine cities were put into it, from the whole of Greater Germany only three (besides, all the three are unknown to us), from Greater Sarmatia only Greek cities on the Pontus coast. There are two or three in each Danubian province, and we could prove in the case in Pannonia, that played a central role in the above mentioned period. Thus it is evident, that Bormanon was not inserted by chance.

It is conspicuous that the Iazygian *'poleis'* are mostly in the northwestern part of the region, and the chief one, Bormanon is almost the northernmost one, probably close to the Germanian borders (and maybe to the Roman borders to). Presently we cannot explain that, because we know too little about the 'city' itself and about Iazygian history.<sup>43</sup>

There is another question which we cannot neglect: do we know this name correctly? The name of Bormanon is unknown except for Ptolemy's two loci: although not a *hapax legomenon* – we might say *dis legomenon*. And like generally the barbarous words which could not be understood by the copyists, the names of the Iazygian *'poleis'* were subject to a sore textual deterioration. There are variations for the names Uskenon, Abiēta, Kandanon and Pession in the *codices*, but perhaps the most crucial enigma of the textual criticism appears in the name of Bormanon, which shows the following forms in the *codices* of Book III: Βόρμανον (EZ), Βορμανόν (ΣΦΨ), Γόρμενον (LRWβα), Φόρμανον (S), in some of the deterior *codices* Ὀρμανον, in the Latin version *Cormanum* too.<sup>44</sup> Evidently there are two major groups of manuscripts, but the *codices* Z and Σ are generally more self-standing with many *lectiones difficiliores*, and they agree with the Bormanon group. (The manuscripts of the Book VIII are mostly for this reading too, as far as we can see from the existing edi-

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<sup>42</sup> It can be easily explained with the refraction effect near the horizon, which makes the day seemingly longer. (After all, it must have been a very hard task to measure the day's length in a mountaneous area, which was inevitably the case everywhere around Bormanon.)

<sup>43</sup> For a short summary of the Iazygian history see Istvánovits E.: Szarmaták a Kárpát-medencében [Sarmatians in the Carpathian Basin]. In: *Jazigok* 33-48. As far as I know, there was no attempt worth considering to identify Bormanon. Nevertheless this region was surely part of the Iazygian territory from the very beginning.

<sup>44</sup> Ed. C. Müller p. 441.

tion, however they are in themselves insufficient for decision.) Thus Müller's final reading *Bormanon* seems to be supported. In his opinion, the name is of Celtic origin, and therefore it had to be originally a settlement of the Boii.<sup>45</sup> Such a definite choice among the Celtic tribes seems rather arbitrary with our present knowledge,<sup>46</sup> but it is quite possible that the 'city', which was related only very briefly after the Iazygian transmigration, developed from a Celtic settlement (as the names Meliodunum, Eburum, Carrodunum, Eburodunum are Celtic in the territory of the Quads). Whether there were Celtic ethnic elements remaining in the days of Marinus or Ptolemy, or the city was purely Iazygian by then, we cannot know.<sup>47</sup>

The Celtic origin is quite probable according to the possible etymology of the name. There are several Celtic place-names with the element *borm-* 'warm': *Aquae Bormani*, *Aquae Bormonis*, *Bormiae Aquae*,<sup>48</sup> all referring to warm medicinal waters (cf. the Celtic healing god aspect of Apollo/Diana with the name *Bormanus/Bormana*). If this etymology is sound, it is a natural explanation why the settlement (or at least the name) was continuous from the Celtic times: because the medicinal waters could not move, and thus gave a natural fix point for the 'city'. Now then, it can help us in the localization too. While variant A seems impossible, variant C is the most likely, since quite a lot of natural medicinal waters are known in and around the Mátra mountains, in the area of the Tarna–Zagyva rivers (for example very near the spot, where the theoretical co-ordinates of *Bormanon/C* variant meet, in the village Egerszalók). Variant B or some place around/between them are less likely, but not impossible: there are some lesser natural medicinal waters in the modern county Nógrád too, and we do not know with certainty whether there were more or fewer in the antiquity.<sup>49</sup>

Philology could advance only this far in the exploration of the chief Iazygian localities. Further movements must be assigned to another discipline – surely, not to the linguistics, as Dezső Simonyi's misbegotten attempts to identify the Ptolemaean localities in the Highlands has shown.<sup>50</sup> The next move can be made by the archaeology, if we can find a Sarmatian settlement in the supposed area which seems to prevail over the others.

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<sup>45</sup> Ed. C. Müller p. 442.

<sup>46</sup> The possible Celtic tribes see Szabó 1988, 35sqq.

<sup>47</sup> The Cotini were the only Celtic (or Dacian, it is questionable, cf. Szabó 1988, 37, Visy 1993) tribe which doubtless remained in the Highlands of the Carpathian Basin under Iazygian rule, as witnessed by Tacitus (*Tac., Germ.* 43).

<sup>48</sup> Holder 1886-1907, I 491-492, III 912-913.

<sup>49</sup> Let us mention Nógrádszakál (near the theoretical *Bormanon/B*), Sósartyán (we can retrace its known history to the Middle Ages). See Prakfalvi 1993, Prakfalvi 1996.

<sup>50</sup> Simonyi 1948. Moreover, it would be a methodological blunder to compare the Iazygian names with later names of any kind, because it would postulate such a continuity of population

In sum, we may assume with tolerable certainty, that in the first Iazygian period after the transmigration their most prominent settlement, ‘city’ was Bormanon, somewhere in the triangle which is confined roughly by the variations A, B, C (in the area Vác-Szécsény-Füzesabony), but the variation B is more likely than the others. We cannot unambiguously decide whether its prominence was retained until the middle of the second century, when Ptolemy finished his work,<sup>51</sup> but he used recent data in that phase too, and therefore it is more likely that there was no great difference from the first century then. This is but a little contribution to the vast complex of the questions of Ptolemy’s dates, but an important one for the Iazygian history.

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which is quite unknown in the northern Carpathian in the migration period, and which can be presumed only at certain points of the western borders of Pannonia.

<sup>51</sup> Not to mention the problems concerning the supposable first and second editions of the works in Ptolemy’s life, cf. Polaschek 1965, 712–726.

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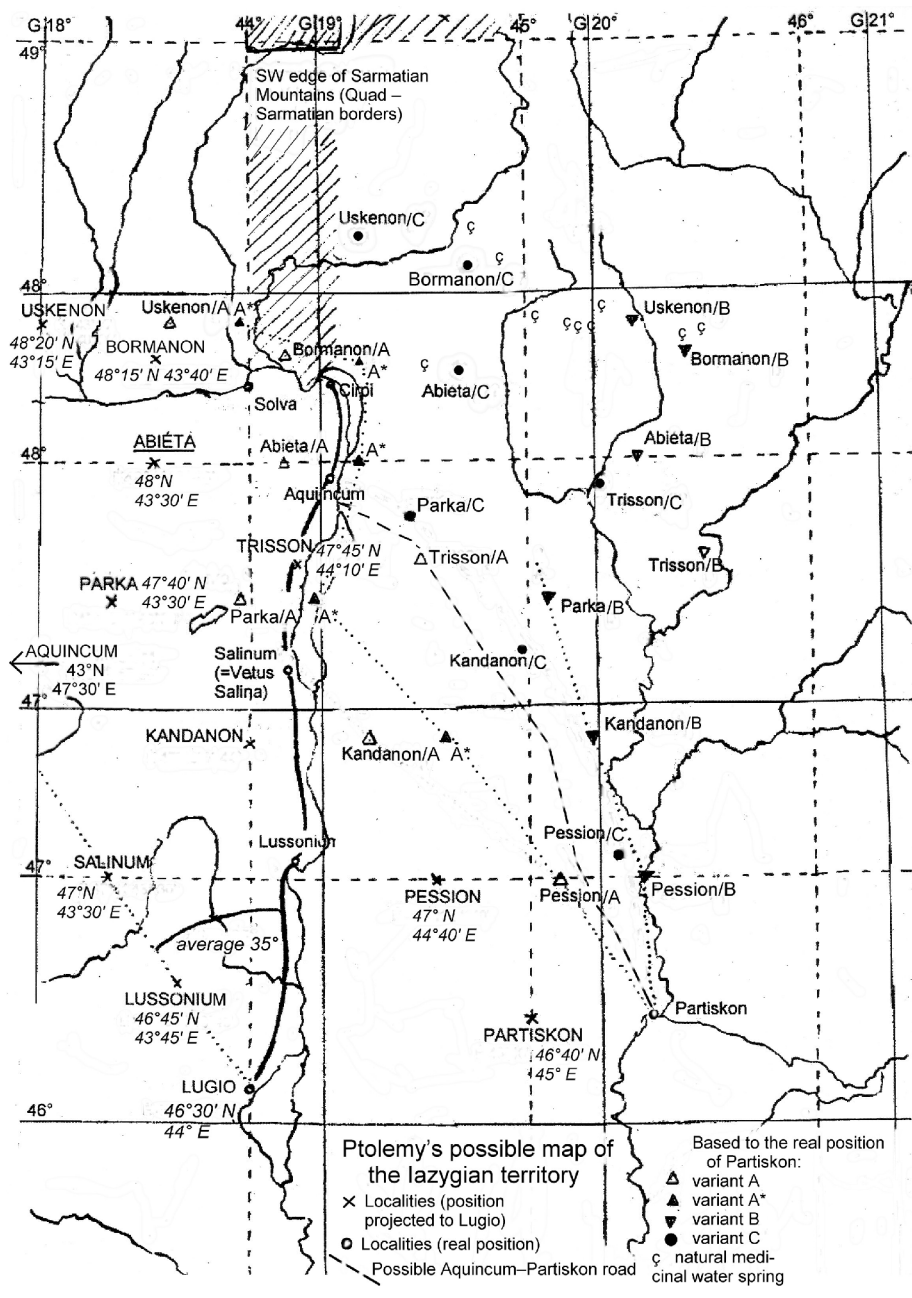


Fig. 1.