

Survey of Roman Roads and Milestones

Begun in 1973, the Roman Roads project was worked on almost annually until 1995 by David French, a veteran of prehistoric survey work but a self-declared amateur in Roman matters with an interest in the topic. His intent was to undertake fieldwork and research on the road systems of Roman Asia Minor, which would allow for a fresh reconstruction of the topography. He was inspired to begin by the discovery in spring 1972 of a group of milestones and associated road paving near ancient Juliopolis, in the region of Bey pazarı, on the border of the ancient Roman provinces of Galatia and Bithynia.

The first full season in 1973 focused on the Caesarea-Tavium route, which was subsequently investigated in its entirety, with a plan and many details recorded.

In 1975, research allowed for the Via Sebaste to be followed from Ürkütlü (Col. Comama) to Yalvaç (Col. Antiochia) and Konya (Col. Iconium). Its route is confirmed as being similar to that shown on the Classical Map of Asia Minor. Roads of Galatia and Cappadocia were also recorded, but with few surprises from the known records. Research on the roads in Pontus and Bithynia was also conducted during this season, and was begun for the roads of Asia, specifically near Dinar (Apameia), Eskişehir (Dorylaeum), Bandırma and Balıkesir. In Cilicia, it was possible to note road traces east and west of Silifke (Seleuceia). A project aimed at discovering milestones was also initiated, and this year French focused on Ankara, Burdur, and Eskişehir regions. In Ankara region 102 milestones were noted, 30 of which had never been published. In the region of Burdur some new milestones were discovered, and two new texts of Augustus from the Via Sebaste were found in the villages of Boğaziçi and Yarı. Where possible, the milestones were brought to a local museum.

Research was taken up again in November 1976, and focused on the Provinces of Afyon, Kütahya, Burdur, Isparta, Niğde, and Yozgat. Results were mixed, but some of the successes included the discovery of a new stone at Afyon, and three new milestones in the Kavuklu village at Niğde, where some published stones were also found. Only one of the twelve known milestones could be found in Isparta, and there were no new discoveries. At Burdur, the Ürkütlü milestone reportedly seen by Berard in 1892 was not discovered, though an identical one was. A single day of research in Yozgat yielded one new stone, discovered in Büyük Nefes village.

The regions of Konya, Kayseri, Yozgat, Tokat, Çorum, Amasya, and Samsun were investigated in 1977, with some difficulty again in locating milestones that had been published. They were, however, able to find three in Incesu and Yozgat, one of which provided names of previously unknown governors. 31 new milestones were discovered along the Caesareia-Melitene road, and there was also some new material from Büyük Nefes in the Konya region. Near Kadişehri, at Çamsaray, they came across a very well-preserved milestone, that could not, however, be moved.

In 1978, eight provinces were investigated for milestones: Çanakkale, Balıkesir, Bursa, Bilecik, Bolu, Zonguldak, Afyon, and Maraş. Though many of the known milestones were difficult to locate, some could be identified in the Göksun area. In Zonguldak, at Çaycuma a few new milestones revealed some rare names of Emperors, and an unpublished stone from Dinar gave three new Imperial names. There were new discoveries along the Caesareia-Melitene road again this season, and between certain stretches there was a marker nearly every 1.6km, i.e. at each Roman mile. One stone appeared to provide evidence for an earlier road.

Part of July and August 1981 were devoted to exploring milestones and Roman roads in Erzincan, Gümüşhane, Bolu, and Sinop. There were no new discoveries of milestones along the limes. A road system in Erzincan could be traced, however, and it was possible to discern the path of the frontier

road. There were also some new areas of road observable around the Sipikör pass. The correct route of the access road between Nicopolis and Satala also came to light, when traces were identified along the Çimendağ. Three milestones were found in Sinop, and a milestone in Bolu which named Creteia Flaviopolis led David French to propose Küçük Ören Mevkii as the location for this site, though this was later determined to be incorrect. Two Greek dedications were recorded in Bolu, and five Latin inscriptions were taken down at Sadak. Based on some discoveries, Öğütlü was also proposed to be ancient Sisila.

In August and September 1982 research continued in the provinces of Maraş, Sivas, Erzincan, Gümüşhane, Trabzon, and Sinop. New milestones were found at Afşin and Elbistan, as well as at Sinop, though there were none to be found in Sivas, Erzincan, Gümüşhane, or Trabzon. Other interesting finds included a Roman road or highway between Şarkışla and Kangal, and some road remains north and east of Sivas. It was also possible to establish the route between Sebastopolis and Sebasteia, and track down the road north of Satala to Trapezus, where the paving could be seen and photographed. The road between Pompeiopolis and Neoclaudiopolis was confirmed, and three milestones attributed to it. Some boundary walls were discovered not far from Altınyayla at Sivas, which may have served to mark the boundaries between ancient Sebasteia, Melitene, and Caesareia.

Work commenced again in July 1983, ceasing between September and November while excavation work on Tille was carried out, then carrying on again until December. Successful research at Çorum led to a new conception of the road network in the region, and allowed for the re-assignment of some milestones discovered earlier. The road system of Pisidia was investigated through Isparta and Burdur, and a few new stones were discovered. The roads around Col. Antiochia were confirmed, and at Burdur the Republican road network was elucidated when a stretch of road to Tacina and two new milestones were found. Research was also undertaken at and around Eskişehir, Afyon, and Denizli. The Cotiaenum-Dorylaeum, Docimeium-Synnada, and Synnada-Philomelium roads came to light as some surfaces were found. David French also recorded some unpublished and published inscriptions.

In 1984 some research was undertaken in Çorum, Amasya, Samsun and Tokat provinces, with a short trip to Antalya. Unpublished milestones were recorded in the villages of Hamdi, Seyfe, and Ertuğrul, and three milestones at Doğantepe (formerly Zara), Bağlıca, Aydoğdu were noted. Two roads – with no milestones – were distinguishable in Çorum, one leading to Vezirköprü (Neoclaudiopolis), the other to Samsun (Amisus). The route between Pompeiopolis and Neocaesareia was also established, and some milestones also came to light here. The road going between Amaseia and Neocaesareia was also substantiated. A precinct of Zeus Stratiotes was investigated again at Yassıçal (previously called Ebimi), where 14 stones were discovered encircling a structure, each stone marking a different region. Finally, in December French visited Giresun in the Çamlıbel pass region to investigate a Latin inscription, also studying the roads at Dereağzı.

In 1985 time was limited, and work took place in a brief two-week season in late November; only Çorum, Amasya, and Sinop were visited. In the first region a new milestone was uncovered that provided the name of one Claudianus, a previously unknown governor of Pontus. In the province of Amasya, two new Diocletianic milestones were found at Boğa and Çiğemlik, and a fragment of a milestone in Amasya itself was taken to the museum.

Between 18 June and 15 August 1986, French continued the project, working until 2 July in and around Çorum, where he both discovered two new milestones (at Kuzoren near Mecitözü, and Yekbaş near Boğazkale), as well as collected material for the RECAM project, finding some Christian gravestones at Geyikhoca near Mecitözü. He also found remnants of a Roman road and an Ottoman

route (known as 'Ceneviz Yolu'). Work was continued in Amasya Province from 3 July to 19 July, where the road system was elucidated, some 20 new inscriptions were collected, ancient sites were investigated, and milestones were recorded in Bağlıca, Akyazı, Ezinepazar, and Toklucak. French proceeded until 6 August in Tokat, where road systems could be investigated and further established; in particular, the road from Neocaesareia to Nicopolis was shown to lead into the mountains to the north, in contrast to what had been believed. New milestones were found at Alayurt, Hatipli, Karaağaç, Yağmurlu, and Boztepe. Two days were then spent in Yozgat Province, where the Zela-Tavium road was explored as well as some nearby structures. In Sinop, between 8 and 11 August, no milestones were found but a short stretch of road was found near Gökçebelen. The Boyabat Kale was also investigated. The project ended at Kastamonu on 15 August, after some exploration of the Roman road near Kovaçayır in the Taşköprü region, where the road could be traced through forested areas nearly to Taşk. One milestone was discovered at Gökbelen. In total, 171 villages were visited over the course of the season.

In 1987, fieldwork continued across eight weeks between July and September, particularly in northern Anatolia, including Amaseia, Neoclaudiopolis, Sinope, and Pompeiopolis. Work commenced at Çorum on 7 July, where the Roman road that led east from Alaca was explored; three milestones were found; and some early Christian gravestones were documented. On 28 July, the work moved to Amasya, where inscriptions continued to be collected, though very few milestones were found. An investigation of a stretch of Roman road between Amaseia and Neocaesareia yielded the discovery of a nearby station and fortification, as well as a small dam nearby. In Samsun, work was undertaken between 13 and 17 August in the Vezirköprü region. They discovered some new milestones at Arica and Gömlekhisar but were less successful in tracing the Roman road west of Neoclaudiopolis, as it was lost in the mountains. On 20 August work was transferred to Çankiri for three days, where they were successful in tracing the road from the Ilgaz mountains towards Kastamonu and confirming the course of the Roman road from Gangra heading west. Two days in Kastamonu were enough to track the Roman road for several kilometres from Gangra down the Ilgaz. The season ended in Sinop, where between 27 August and 4 September they found a few milestones near Lala.

Though no research was undertaken in 1988, work continued in 1989 from 17 July to 28 August. In Sinop, two milestones were discovered, as well as some epigraphic material and some stamped amphora handles. The Roman road south of Sinop was also investigated, as well as some ancient sites along it. In Amasya, the two Roman routes (to Suluova, and then from there to Osmaniç) were explored, with researchers finding and recording some interesting sites along the latter, such as a hamam and an Early Bronze Age settlement. Two milestones were studied at Çorum. In Afyon, the Roman road from Dinar to the north was explored and traced to the north side of the Sincanlı plain. At Burdur, they took another look at the Roman road between Kozluca and Ürkütlü, as well as at the one to Gölhisar from the northeast. A milestone was found at Büyük Alan, and in Kayadibi village an ancient settlement was noted. The last stop was Antalya, where the Gölhisar-Antalya road could be explored as it ran south of Söğüt. An especially well-preserved stretch of Roman road could be found in Hangediği, and an important historical site at Beğiş was noted. The Roman road going through Döşeme Boğazı proved to host some interesting and important structures, such as a tomb monument, some sarcophagi, and an Ottoman cistern.

In 1990 fieldwork lasted between 8 June and 23 July, with a brief extension from 23 to 27 November. Beginning in Sinop, a milestone was found at Boyabat, and a text of Probus. A rock-monument near Dodurga was visited, as well as an unpublished kale near Çukurhan. In three days following this, two milestones were recorded and two long inscriptions squeezed at Amasya. Then in Çorum Province on 14 June a milestone was reported at Çitli. Kütahya was visited between 16 and 21 June, where in

the provinces a milestone was found and the Roman road network was elucidated, though the overgrown harvest made tracing it difficult. At Uşak between 23 and 29 June they recorded the remains of a road going between Temenotherae and Sebaste and noted a large fortification near Ağaçbeyli. At Afyon, from 29 June to 10 July they recorded a new milestone near Yıldırım Kemal and visited some other sites. At Denizli for five days they investigated roads: one from Sebaste to Peltae in the Bulgaz region, where a well-preserved milestone was found at Cabar, and one from Hierapolis towards Cibyra, where some nice stretches could be traced. Some other milestones were recorded, and some texts. From 17 to 19 July, they moved to Isparta, where they looked at reported milestones and recorded inscriptions. Finally, in Antalya, they had some very significant finds in Pamphylia, with traces of road and a new milestone dating to 129-126 BC. The Roman road in Döşeme Boğazı was surveyed. The extended time in November was also spent here, exploring ancient Isinda, which was determined to be Kışla Mahallesi, where there is an acropolis, and other buildings and pottery. Ancient Lagbe, at what is now Alifahrettin Yaylası, was also investigated. Some new inscriptions were found near Korkuteli, and Korucuk Mahallesi was explored, and found to be predominantly Roman.

Another year of fieldwork occurred in 1991, between 31 October and 26 November. The goal for the season was to focus on road-systems reaching to the western edge of the interior and on the more mountainous regions around Pamphylia, Pisidia, Isauria, Lycia, and Asia. They also hoped to locate milestones mentioned by earlier travellers. They were largely successful in their goals. They began in Kütahya, and worked there until 6 November, concentrating on Çavdarhisar and Dumlupınar. They then spent 4 days in Uşak and Denizli, investigating the road-system south of Uşak. A document from Şapcılar was squeezed, and a milestone in Pamukkale Museum from Karahisar was documented. However, most of the fieldwork was completed in Antalya from 18 to 26 November, where they explored the road from Perge to Magydus, which provided a fine example of Roman technical achievement. The road between Manavgat and Akseki was also observed, and what was possibly a road-terminus stone discovered at Demre was recorded.

In 1993, French worked in Konya Province between 17 and 19 November, where three milestones were found in Hatunsaray, and in Antalya Province between 24 November and 11 December.

French took up fieldwork on 18 October 1994 in Tokat Province, finishing 9 November in İzmir Province. He also did work in Samsun, Yozgat, and İzmir Provinces.

In a last season of work in 1995, French worked in Çorum between 9 and 23 October, in Amasya from 24 to 30 October, with the specific goals of investigating the northeastern regions of Çorum, the route between Alaca and Amasya, and the northern and southern roads of İzmir.