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The Northern Necropolis of Apulum

“Ambulance Station” 1981–1985

Necropola nordică de la Apulum

„Stația de salvare” 1981–1985

with contribution of:

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FOREWORD

Lately, the capital of Roman Dacia, *Apulum*, has become a Roman archaeological objective researched thoroughly by an impressive number of rescue excavations, which pointed out an important number of private complexes, either military or funerary. Within this context, reevaluation of the whole heritage preserved in the collection of the museum was, and became a mandatory need to integrate discoveries and to present them appropriately to know those of funerary character, mainly.

This archaeological monograph proposed by George Bounegru represents analysis of sampled funerary discoveries resulted from the northern necropolis from Apulum. The samples of 161 graves predominantly represent personal researches included in the doctoral thesis of the author, as well as more rescue excavations carried out by Gheorghe Anghel, Ioan Alexandru Aldea, Cloșca L. Băluță, Radu Ciobanu, Vasile Moga, Alexandru Popa within this necropolis. Archaeologists did us the courtesy of giving the archaeological material resulted from their own researches.

Discoveries were made between 1981 and 1985. Necessity of publishing the whole funerary Roman fund discovered during the latest decades is vitally important to understand the urban habitation with its development throughout time, in its most diverse aspects: not only of funerary rite, but especially the contribution offered by the inventory discovered in certain graves with specific particularities for some social categories whether they were civil or military.

Definitely, the northern necropolis is named after the most important number of grave discoveries **Statia de Salvare**, being known under this technical name in many specialised papers.

The considerable effort made by the author was to frame the graves to be studied within the stratigraphy of the necropolis, bringing into focus not only graves discovered between 1981 and 1985, but also more recent ones subsequent to 2002, discoveries resulted following rescue excavations carried out during this period. Otherwise it is a successful attempt, by entering the necropolis in a general data base, important stratigraphic elements clearly identifying two important phases one Roman and a second from early Middle Ages.

Starting from this correct interpretation, G. Bounegru succeeded to detail his study based on biritualism of Roman graves of incineration and inhumation by thorough analysis of the graves' shape, manner of deposition of inhumation and incineration in the pit, next to deposited funerary inventory, its place within the inside of the funerary dwelling, important aspects in correct understanding of such discoveries.

Within his approach, the author brings to special attention inventory discoveries from graves formed from offerings, less food offerings, especially depositions of ceramics (as vessels of different types, pitchers, bowls, turibula, lamps), toys, terracottas deposited beside the deceased, glass *unguentaria* few in number, only 3, it is true, and only subsequently, did he initiate study of the personal items of the individual (clothing accessories: fibula, pendants, bead necklaces and especially coins) important in setting up more precise time limits, elements also offered by clothing accessories and even lamps. Gathering together all obtained data offered the author the possibility of some interesting conclusions brought together in the final chapter of the book.

An extremely essential aspect revealed by the carried out research is particular focus on numbers of incineration graves as opposed to inhumation ones. With certain reservations, we are drawn attention over the graves with the ritualistically burnt pit which find analogies in the Illyrian world, for instance, discoveries from Alburnus Maior (Roşia Montană) from Dacia but also from the native area, south-Danubian Dalmatian. This category of graves subsumes under – in the correct opinion of G. Bounegru the type I Garašanin and type IIIa Golubovič, chronologically set up between the mid of the Ist century (beginning of the IInd century as regards Apulum) and mid of the IIIrd century AD.

Chronology of the necropolis for the area where the analysed graves appeared is connected with beginning of formation of community from Apulum. This landmark is based on discovery of a Noric-Pannonian fibula covering a time span between end of Ist century and first half of the IInd century. Coins discovered by several early finds testify to burials in the first half of the IInd century. Monetary discoveries, beside other finds of military equipment or other accessories, point out further usage of the terrain as necropolis throughout the IInd century to the first half of the IIIrd century.

On the researched territory few graves were found to be accompanied by the related stone monuments and only one sarcophagus were correctly analysed by the author.

The 161 samples of graves studied by Mr. G. Bounegru of the 1035 funerary discoveries known until now from this northern necropolis represent the **beginning** of study on Apulum. Disposing of a modest data base, for now, it was succeeded by this monograph to introduce within specialised literature more complete information about a necropolis from Apulum, that I personally hope that the author will continue, so that we have an overall image over this spiritual phenomenon. We focused on the subjects debated by the paper to try to underline the essential merits of the book.

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