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***THE APULUM “STADION”
ROMAN NECROPOLIS***

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

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Key words: Apulum “Stadion”, Roman necropolis, tombs, incineration, inhumation, funerary rite and ritual, funerary inventory, funerary context, statistics

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Funerary archaeology of the Roman province Dacia owns its corpus of knowledge to the sequential publication of studies carried out in necropolises investigated usually only in part, mainly during campaigns mandated by archaeological discharge operations of sites which should have made the object of urbanistic development over the last 70 years. Only a very small percentage of the funerary archaeological research was carried out after inclusion in the annual funding programs and in a systematic manner.

Given this context, the finalization around 2010 of research in the Northern necropolis of ancient Apulum presented itself as an excellent opportunity for a monographical attempt analyzing the location, the development and evolution of one of the most important burial sites in Roman Dacia. This work, which allowed us to approach such a generous and meaningful theme in the field of History and Archaeology, became the present doctoral thesis.

Chapter 1 includes a succinct description of the geographical and geological situation of the target site in relation to the Mureş Valley couloir, as well as of the archaeological environment in the urban centre Apulum.

Regarding the necropolises on the urban centre Apulum (**Map no. 4**), the location of the best known funerary areas of the dwelling are briefly mentioned, sites where funerary monuments and archaeological material stemming from funerary arrangements were discovered starting with the end of the 19th century.

- a. the Apulum "Podei – Dealul Furcilor" biritual necropolis
- b. the Apulum "Stadion" biritual necropolis
- c. the Roman necropolis at Municipium Aurelium Apulense, located most probably in the Partoş Bridge area
- d. the cluster of Roman tombs (necropolis?) to the West of the Aurelia Apulensis colony

A subsection of this chapter is dedicated to terminology and introduces terms and notions used throughout the thesis for defining, describing and explaining various archaeological concepts, phenomena, processes, or materials.

CHAPTER 2

PREVIOUS RESEARCH DEDICATED TO THE APULUM “STADION” NECROPOLIS. LIMITS OF THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

Chapter 2 describes succinctly the previous campaigns of archaeological research carried out at the target site. The seven rescue excavation campaigns are being reviewed, as well as the scientific papers published until now, either regarding individual campaign or synthetical works.

Limits of the scientific approach

Limits of research described in the present paper derive especially from the nature of the multiple archaeological campaigns carried out at this site, exclusively rescue or preventive archaeological interventions, preceding large-scale urbanistic approaches. This type of field intervention brings along a host of inherent difficulties, the most important being probably the strict time limitation. Also, the methods employed were a mixture between traditional archaeological field methods (site cleaning, tracing of the research units, manual uncovering, revealing of the archaeological complexes and their direct investigation, creating the technical documentation by sketching, drawing, taking of pictures, plotting etc.), combined and enhanced by modern methods such as archaeological prospection, photodetection, GIS projection etc.). These methods frequently interfered with unwanted factors, such as exhaustive mechanical uncovering, mechanical digging for pipings or wirings, interference with building site activities scheduled to be carried out in parallel with the archaeological intervention. However, the most difficult problem regarding the integrative approach of all research carried out on this Roman necropolis was the management of the excavation site documentation from previous campaigns. Most issues stemmed from the 1979-1981 and respectively the 1981-1985 campaigns. Arguments among team members, most of which are no longer among us today, lead to the unfortunate situation where not only a complete site documentation, but also a large part of the archaeological findings from those campaigns remained practically unattainable.

Given the above, **the present thesis only discusses the archaeological complexes and findings stemming from the 2002-2003 and 2010 campaigns (Harta 11)**. Regarding the previous campaigns, the only data included were those provided by former research team members: the late M. Blăjan for the 1979-1981 campaign (who in 2009 provided a

synthetic presentation, along with the verbal agreement to use the excavation site logs), and Mr. H. Ciugudean for the 1981-1985 campaigns (who kindly provided a brief synthesis for the Roman tombs investigated by a team whose member he was).

CHAPTER 3

ACCOUNT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

This chapter describes chronologically, in some detail, all the excavation campaigns, mentioning the composition of the research teams, as well as the results of each campaign. In order to illustrate and correctly localize the research areas, we refer to archaeological maps compiled precisely to specify investigation perimeters, both before 2000 and during the 2002-2010 campaigns.

CHAPTER 4

REPERTORY OF THE TOMBS IN THE APULUM “STADION” NECROPOLIS

Over almost 200 pages, the chapter offers an exhaustive description of the 734 tombs discovered between 2002 and 2010, following a typization scheme that provides data on the location of the funerary complex, its dimensions and shape, funeral rite, orientation, characteristics of each individual complex, and funerary inventory (complete with description of the artefacts identifiable in terms of type and shape). The funerary complexes, also called *tombs*, are described under the following repertory entries:

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1 – 197 | OMV sector (2002) |
| 198 – 573 | PROFI sector (2002-2003) |
| 574 – 734 | Oancea-Țopa sector (2010) |

The Roman tombs in the **Ambulance station** sector, as well as those discovered during the 1979-1980 and 1981-1985 campaigns (186 and 149 tombs, respectively), are not discussed in this thesis. However, they are considered in the general statistics of the necropolis, in terms of number and funerary rite.

CHAPTER 5

NON-FUNERARY STRUCTURES

The chapter presents succinctly a few of the funerary complexes that attest to the existence of a drainage system throughout the necropolis, referencing discoveries from the 2003-2010 timespan. Also, it discusses two findings that appear to be man-made walls delimiting funerary complexes.

A further object of the chapter is the rapport between the necropolis and the Roman road North to the ancient dwelling. As it is known from sources of the Antiquity, Roman necropoles were located to the periphery of the dwellings, alongside the road entering/leaving the town, an observance that is attested by all Roman dwellings – little copies of Rome. The necropoles of the urban centre Apulum are no exception; their location is indisputably related to the main roads constructed very early during the establishment of the Roman province Dacia.

Regarding the Northern necropolis of Apulum, which makes the object of the present thesis, a relation between its location and the Roman road to the Roman mining centre Ampelum can be ascertained (**Map no. 4**).

CHAPTER 6

FUNERARY STRUCTURES. TOMB TYPOLOGY

The first observation that ensues from an analysis of the general plan of the Roman necropolis is related to its flatness, though no rigorous zonation can be seen or deduced.

Regarding the typology of tombs in the necropolis, we suggest a classification according to a typological scheme that was already published in 2011 in order to describe the various tomb types encountered throughout the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis. As mentioned before, only the tombs studied in the 2002-2010 campaigns were included, according to the tomb repertory presented in Chapter 4.

A. Inhumation tombs (112):

Type AI: simple grave inhumation tombs = 87

Subtype AIa: simple grave inhumation, in a shroud = 84 tombs. This type makes for the largest part of inhumation tombs and usually observes an orientation along the E-

W and N-S axes, the occurring small deviations being probably due to the season when the entombment took place.

Subtype A1b: inhumation within wooden coffins = 3 tombs. This type of tombs are very scarce; actually, the findings of actual wooden coffins are extremely rare; tombs containing iron nails that could have originated from such coffins were also included under this category.

Type AII: brick cist (Ziegelplattenkisten) inhumation tombs = 25 tombs. A fairly frequent type; according to the built of the brick cist, two variants can be differentiated:

Subtype AIIa = 16 tombs: tombs in a rectangular cist made of *tegulae* placed on their edges and set in a lime-based mortar; the cist's floor may also consist of *tegulae* layed out flat or, alternatively, can be left in clean clay, uncovered by *tegulae*.

Subtype AIIb = 9 tombs: tombs in a rectangular cist made of Roman bricks layed normally, in successive horizontal layers set in a lime-based mortar.

Tip AIII: stone sarcophagus inhumation tombs = none in the 2002-2010 campaign (they are altogether unfrequent in this necropolis; only two cases are mentioned by studies carried out in the '80s, one being discovered in 1982).

B. Incineration tombs (615 tombs and 7 cenotaphs):

Type BI: incineration tombs with simple grave (ustrina) = 598 tombs

Subtype BIa: incineration tombs in a simple (unburned) grave = 550 tombs. This is the most frequently encountered type throughout the necropolis; the graves take various shapes, from oval to rectangular or circular, or sometimes irregular.

Subtype BIb: incineration tombs in a ritually burned grave = 48 tombs. Tombs of this type may easily be confounded with those identified by some specialists as *busta*, because of the red colour of the grave's margins. However, these tombs are less deep, so that the ritual burning/purification of the grave leaves behind a smaller amount of ashes or charcoal; the small amount of incinerated bones also asks that this type of tombs should be assigned a distinct category.

Type BII: incineration tombs with urns = 5 tombs. Quite rare, they can be found however in certain points of the necropolis, clustered together in small groups of tombs of this type.

Type BIII: on-site burning incineration tombs (busta) = 12 tombs

Subtype BIIIa: incineration tombs with stepped wall graves. There were no funerary complexes in this necropolis that could be assigned to this category; no complexes unearthed in the 2002-2003 and 2010 campaigns present the specific features, while *bustum*-type complexes from previous campaigns more likely pertain to the following category.

Subtype BIIIb: incineration tombs with smooth wall graves = 12 tombs. *Bustum*-type tombs unearthed in the 1980-1985 campaigns, with on-site burning in ovoidal or rectangular graves, most probably belong here, although even those might pertain to type Ib really. There was a number of 18 tombs discovered during the 1981-1985 campaign and categorized as *busta*, however their description is incomplete, so that a majority of them might really belong to the BIb type – tombs with ritually burned grave.

Type BIV: empty tombs (*Leergräber*) = 7 tombs. The so-called cenotaph tombs may be filed under this category. Their grave does not contain any incineration remains, however they display a specific funerary layout or they contain remains of offerings – pottery or ceramic fragments.

Below is a general/overall statistics regarding number and type of funerary rite of the tombs in the flat Apulum “Stadion” necropolis. The figures, updated after taking into consideration all site logs, show a structure of the necropolis similar to that published by us in 2011. There are small differences regarding the number of tombs pertaining to one rite or to the other (inhumation or incineration).

Table 1. Distribution by funerary rite of the tombs in the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis

| Necropolis sector | Time | Total no. of tombs | Incineration | Inhumation | Cenotaphs |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| Railway station | 1957 ¹ | 7 | 6 | 1 | - |
| Ambulance station | 1979 - 1980 ² | 186 | 112 | 74 | - |
| Ambulance station / veterinary clinic | 1981 – 1985 ³ | 149 | 88 | 61 | - |

¹ **Research group 1957:** Dumitru Protase

² **Research group 1979-1980** (Oct. 1979, Apr. 16 – Dec 30 1980): M. Blăjan, Al. Popa și I. Șerban. Data kindly provided by M. Blăjan (March 2009).

³ **Research group 1981-1985** : I. Șerban, H. Ciugudean, V. Moga, Cl. Băluță, I. Al. Aldea. Many thanks to Mr. H. Ciugudean, who kindly provided the data (Nov. 2009).

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| OMV | 2002 ⁴ | 197 | 157 | 39 | 1 |
| PROFI | 2002 ⁵ -2003 ⁶ | 376 | 329 | 42 | 5 |
| STADION (Oancea- Țopa) | 2010 ⁷ | 161 | 136 | 24 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 1957-2010 | 1076 | 828 | 241 | 7 |
| PERCENTAGE | | 100% | 76.95 % | 22.40% | 0.65% |

CHAPTER 7

FUNERARY RITE AND RITUAL

In this chapter, the concepts of funerary rite and ritual are discussed, the way they are mentioned by literary sources of Antiquity. The ritual processions and the stages of the funerary ritual are also described.

Incineration

This is the most common funerary rite throughout the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis, with close to 77% of the tombs pertaining to it. In the largest necropolis in Apulum, the necropolis at “Dealul Furcilor – Podei”, over 50% of the tombs are incineration tombs (cf. A. Bolog).

Inhumation

As mentioned before, the flat necropolis at Apulum „Stadion” is a biritual one, inhumation tombs making up for 22.4% of the total.

CHAPTER 8

NON-CERAMIC FUNERARY INVENTORY

This chapter discusses the various types of inventory found in tombs, classified as follows: personal belongings of the deceased (articles for personal grooming, jewellery, games, individual military equipment), coins, household articles, glass, various other artefacts.

⁴ **Research group OMV 2002** (March 13 -Apr. 20, 2002): Constantin Inel, Matei Drâmbărean, Adrian Gligor, Aurel Dragotă, Radu Ciobanu (MNUAI), Gabriel Rustoiu, Dorin Ovidiu Dan (DJCCPCN Alba)

⁵ **Research group Profi 2002** (Aug. 21 – Oct. 31, 2002): Aurel Dragotă (MNUAI), Gabriel Rustoiu (DJCCPCN Alba), Dan-Sever Brânda (MNUAI).

⁶ **Research group Profi 2003** (Apr. 21 – Aug. 15, 2003): Aurel Dragotă (PI), Cristinel Plantos, Dan Sever Brânda (MNUAI), Gabriel Tiberiu Rustoiu (DCCPCN Alba).

⁷ **Research group Stadion 2010** (July 25 – Sept. 2010): Constantin Inel (PI), Ovidiu Oargă, Adrian Bolog (MNUAI).

There is an obvious quantitative discrepancy between the funerary ceramic inventory and the non-ceramic one discovered in the same context, the latter being way sparser; also, its conservation state is rather precarious. These inventory categories are discussed with reference to the repertory of the 734 tombs unearthed in the 2002-2010 campaigns.

With regard to the metal inventory, 124 tombs were found as to contain various objects, such as ornaments or pieces of jewellery, iron nails, fragments stemming from metal utensils or tools, etc. Another 114 tombs were discovered that contained pieces of military equipment, included objects such as *fibulae*, metal plaques, belt pieces, but also iron spikes for the *calliga*.

Another category of non-ceramic inventory is glassware (ritual bottles or pitchers, *unguentarium*, respectively *guttus*-type), that was found in 11 tombs, usually in association with other inventory categories (metal, coins, and ceramics).

Coins represent a distinct category; they were found in 36 tombs unearthed in the 2002-2010 timespan; their repertory, however, includes pieces that were previously published, being discovered in the inventory of tombs unearthed in campaigns prior to 2002.

The main characteristic of the discussed non-ceramic inventory is its fragmentary appearance, heavily affected by the environmental conditions of the funerary complexes, but even more so by the very participation, in case of incineration tombs, to the physical process of being burned on the funeral pyre, at very high temperatures, which lead to the desintegration or at least to the irreversible deterioration of many of the artefacts.

CHAPTER 9

FUNERARY CERAMIC INVENTORY

Funerary ceramics is the best represented category in the inventory of the tombs in the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis. It was found in over 400 of the 734 tombs recorded during the 2002-2010 campaigns, which makes for a percentage of 55,58%.

***Terra sigillata* ceramics**

Terra sigillata ceramics was seldom found in the tombs' inventory. This luxury ceramic ware was only discovered in four tombs, even if *terra sigillata* ceramics appears sometimes in drawings depicting funeral feasts.

Everyday use pottery

This is the best represented category of archaeological material found in the tombs in this necropolis. The typology of the discovered pieces shows that, besides several types of pottery used mainly for funerary or commemoration offerings, other less specific types of pottery are found as well, currently used for storage or for serving food and drinks.

Lamps

The most frequent type of lamp found within the funerary inventory is the *monolychnis*, made of brick-red paste and with open channel. In the typology of epigraphic lamps discovered at Apulum, this lamp had been categorized under type Xb.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

The Roman necropolis at Apulum “Stadion”, with its 1076 tombs, is **the second largest Roman cemetery in Dacia**, its whole area having already been investigated archaeologically. Actually, this cemetery comes after the first necropolis of the urban centre Apulum, the one located in Dealul Furcilor „Podei”, where over 1300 Roman tombs have been discovered up to now, while only 25 to 30% of its total area has been investigated. So, a first generally relevant observation would be that, up to now, Roman funerary archaeology counts **over 2350 tombs inventorized for Apulum, its most important urban centre.**

Concerning the layout and the character of the necropolis, there has to be mentioned that the Northern necropolis of the urban centre Apulum was a flat cemetery hosting both funerary rites of the times, incineration and inhumation. Its conventional name, Apulum “Stadion”, borrowed from recent times, was allotted after analyses that allowed us to locate its focal area in a modern part of the city.

Based on the typological categorization of the studied tombs, the first conclusion that can be drawn relatively to the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis is the ethnic heterogeneity of the population that made use of this vast funerary area. Considering that Apulum was the most important dwelling of Roman Dacia, such a conclusion is common sense and something to be expected. Apulum hosted not only military of Roman citizenship (members of the XIIIth Legion Gemina, quartered less than 500 m South to the necropolis), but also settlers of Illyrian, Dalmatian or Tracian origin, from Noricum and Pannonia, along with traders,

businessmen and Imperial office holders arriving here from Eastern parts of the Empire. The ethnic element of provincial Dacians or of the Carpi settled down during the Marcomannic Wars most certainly added to the above.

Another aspect of our studies, extremely important and relevant for the scientific character of the thesis, stems from the statistical analysis of the data provided by site logs, more specifically of the tomb inventory in the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis.

Table 2 shows the *typological distribution of the 734 tombs* unearthed in the 2002-2010 campaigns. The figures clearly show that the dominant funerary rite (over 80%) was that of incineration, at least for the sector investigated during those campaigns, which stretches to the right of the road know today as Calea Moților.

Table 2. Typological structure of the tombs unearthed during the 2002-2010 campaigns.

Apulum “Stadion” necropolis

| Code | Funerary rite | No. tombs | Percentage |
|----------------------|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Type AI | grave inhumation | 87 | 11.85% |
| Subtype AIa | simple grave inhumation, in a shroud | 84 | 11.44% |
| Subtype AIb | inhumation in a wooden coffin placed in a simple grave | 3 | 0.41% |
| Tip AII | brick cist inhumation | 25 | 3.40% |
| Subtype AIIa | inhumation in a cist made of bricks set on the edge | 16 | 2.18% |
| Subtype AIIb | inhumation in a cist made of bricks set in layers | 9 | 1.22% |
| Type AIII | stone sarcophagus inhumation | - | - |
| Type BI | simple grave incineration (<i>ustrina</i>) | 598 | 81.48% |
| Subtype BIa | incineration in a simple, unburned grave | 550 | 74.93% |
| Subtype BIb | incineration in a ritually burned grave | 48 | 6.55% |
| Type BII | urn incineration | 5 | 0.68% |
| Type BIII | incineration with on-site burning (<i>busta</i>) | 12 | 1.64% |
| Subtype BIIIa | on-site burning incineration, grave with stepped walls | - | - |
| Subtype BIIIb | on-site burning incineration, grave with smooth walls | 12 | 1,64% |
| Type BIV | empty tombs / cenotaph (<i>Leergräber</i>) | 7 | 0.95% |
| TOTAL | 2002-2010 excavation campaigns | 734 | 100% |

Considering **the presence, respectively the absence of funerary inventory**, 207 (28.20%) of the 734 tombs studied in the 2002-2010 campaigns did not contain funerary inventory such as ceramics, metal, coins, etc., while over two thirds of the analyzed funerary complexes (527 tombs, 71.80%) contained such inventory.

The funerary inventory discovered in over two thirds of the tombs in the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis offers a host of information regarding the funerary ritual. The best represented category of objects is ceramics, found in over 50% of the funerary complexes, three times more frequent than the next category, consisting of metal objects, which were discovered in almost 17% of the studied tombs.

No funerary inscriptions were found in the Apulum “Stadion” cemetery to attest for a higher social status of the deceased and, as such, a probable affiliation to the Roman army. However, a tomb in the Profi sector (M/S) was discovered, that contained a stone fragment representing an eagle, a funerary pine and further pillar elements. These pieces suggest that this could have been a furnished tomb, but they cannot attest with certitude that it belonged to a Roman military.

However, the old collection and the MNUAI lapidary own several funerary inscriptions which hold the indication of their origin in the Roman necropolis to the North and North-West of the castrum. These inscriptions were published by I. Piso in the corpus dedicated to the urban ensemble of Apulum.

On the other hand, the funerary inventory is in itself suggestive of the social status of the deceased. Many tombs in the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis contained pieces of military equipment, which may indicate that the necropolis was also used by the troops of the XIIIth Legion Gemina, however the total percentage of tombs belonging to military is difficult to assess at the moment. A more precise estimation will be possible only after the tomb inventory analyses will be finished.

A typological analysis of the funerary complexes of the Apulum “Stadion” necropolis, correlated with observations regarding other aspects of the funerary rituals, of the beliefs and observances occurring during burial, but also periodically at later times, provided a complex body of data related to this vast and fully investigated necropolis, making it into a standard against which other Roman necropoles in Dacia will have to be compared.

Considering the novelty of the archaeological material processed for this thesis, the large amount and the categorial diversity of artefacts making up the tomb inventories, and the abundance of funerary rite and ritual features mentioned throughout the work, we are confident that this scientific endeavour will become a required tool for the specialists in the field of funerary archaeology of Roman Dacia.

Even with all the inevitable deficiencies and omissions of a doctoral thesis, we believe that this work will open the way to a number of papers containing the full results of our studies and we hereby suggest the initiation of a special series dedicated to the funerary archaeology of the urban centre Apulum, perhaps even under the self-defining name of *Funeraria Apulensis*, containing the newest results of archaeological research regarding the necropoles of the Roman dwelling.

CHAPTER 11

REFERENCES

The reference list is theme-structured: abbreviations, studies regarding Apulum, papers and monographs regarding necropoles, guidebooks for archaeologic material, studies and papers regarding the cemeteries of Apulum, digital database, sources of Antiquity – printed and digital editions.

2nd Volume: APPENDIX

The thesis has a second volume appended, containing illustrative material: 16 high quality and explicit maps, 39 figures consisting of excavation pictures and pictures of special funerary inventory (coins), 321 plates with archaeologic material and sometimes pictures of the

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