

**REVISTA DOCTORANZILOR ÎN
ISTORIE VECHĂ ȘI ARHEOLOGIE**

ReDIVA

**THE POSTGRADUATE JOURNAL
OF ANCIENT HISTORY AND
ARCHAEOLOGY**

II/2014

**CLUJ-NAPOCA
2014**

CONTENTS

STUDIES

- MARIANA PROCIUC, VLAD CODREA**
Archaeozoology and palaeontology of the Subpiatră Cave
(Bihor County, Romania) 11
- AURORA PEȚAN**
An unknown stone structure in *Sarmizegetusa Regia's*
sacred zone recorded in writings of the 19th century 28
- MÁTYÁS BAJUSZ, AURORA PEȚAN**
Two bronze bracelets with looped and twisted ends from
the notes of Téglás István 41
- CSABA SZABÓ**
Discovering the gods in *Apulum*:
historiography and new perspectives 53
- RADU IUSTINIAN ZĂGREANU, CLAUDIU IONUȚ IOV**
A Roman funerary stela from *Porolissum* 83
- ALEXANDRA TEODOR**
The roman defensive system(s) of *Tomis*. Some issues in
the light of the current knowledge 92

REVIEWS

- Todd L. VanPool, Robert D. Leonard, *Quantitative
Analysis in Archaeology*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
(**LAURA-SIMONA DRAȘOVEAN**) 149
- Luca-Paul Pupeză, *Veacul întunecat al Daciei*,
Cluj-Napoca, 2012. (**RALUCA-ELIZA BĂTRÎNOIU**) 153
- Ioan Piso, Viorica Rusu-Bolindeț, Rada Varga, Silvia Mustață,
Ligia Ruscu (eds.), *Scripta Classica. Radu Ardevan
sexagenario dedicata*, Cluj-Napoca, 2011. (**AURORA PEȚAN**) 159
- Rada Varga, *The Peregrini of Roman Dacia (106-212)*,
Cluj-Napoca, 2014. (**COSMIN COATU**) 167

Luca-Paul Pupeză, Veacul întunecat al Daciei. Arheologie și istorie în spațiul carpato-danubian de la sfârșitul secolului III a.Chr. până la începutul secolului I a. Chr [The Dark Age of Dacia. Archaeology and history in the Carpathian-Danubian region between the end of the 3rd century BC and the beginning of the 1st century BC], Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2012, 500 pages, ISBN 978-606-543-296-3.

Paul Pupeză is an archaeologist at the National History Museum of Transylvania and a member of the research team from Sarmizegetusa Regia. The present book represents his PhD thesis, and was published by Mega Publishing House.

The paper is divided in several chapters, each dealing with a specific, well-delineated issue, all together coherently aiming to draw the full image of Dacia during its “Dark age”. The author explains in the *Introduction* (p. 11-18) the terms used in the title in order to justify their appropriateness. By the *Dark Age*, he aims to represent a period that is difficult to understand in the present, mostly due to the character of the sources than that of the period in itself. Also, by *Dacia* he understands the territory inhabited by the Dacians, that does not have well-determined boundaries, and he rejects the use of Dacians-Getae as he considers it a modern creation, opinion that will be further explained in a different chapter. He argues that history and archaeology are two notions that complement each other in order to paint the picture of an ancient society and he emphasises the need to overcome the funerary point of view in the attempt to understand a period. He uses the notion *Carpathian-Danubian*, although he admits it to be difficult to define, in order to give a geographical perspective based on which to organize the information in the following chapter. From a chronological point of view, the author deals with a time of major changes for the above mentioned space that he describes as “the transition period from the golden age of the Getic aristocracy to the kingdom of the Dacian silver”. His motivation for dealing with this period is that it has not been approached in a unitary manner before, and it aims to give a much needed broader perspective.

In the second chapter, *Archaeology* (p. 19-236), the author presents the most important archaeological discoveries, not aiming to make

an exhaustive repertoire, as he admits, but to bring together the necessary information to draw conclusions about the chronology and the habitat. For this, he has divided the information in three parts corresponding to geographical regions, to establish the local features, both funerary and related to the habitat. These sections are *Sites from the Carpathian Region*, *Sites from the South of the Carpathians*, and *Sites from the East of the Carpathians*, each comprising a brief descriptions of the most important sites known, either settlements or necropolises, most of them dating from the IIIrd -IInd centuries BC or the IInd-Ist centuries BC. For each site the author describes the relevant complexes and archaeological material found, the chronological phase and he also gives plates with plans or drawings of the material. For some of the sites, a more detailed description would have been welcomed. Also, the author considers Zimnicea a fortified settlement, although recent reinterpretations and research have proven that the presumed ditch is actually a natural one¹.

The third chapter, *History* (p. 237-414), is divided in four sections, each of them comprising several topics. It is important to mention that this division of the text in numerous chapters and sub-chapters is necessary and very useful in order to organize the information and give each subject its due importance.

First of all, the section entitled *The settlements* comprises information about the geographical factors, habitation structures, types of settlements, the disappearance/appearance of fortifications and the chronology of the settlements. The author tries to explain the reasons why the inhabitants chose different areas for their settlements, observing the predisposition for high areas and the importance of natural resources. The most important part is related to the fortifications, and it is noted that there are two phases when fortifications were erected, namely the IVth century BC-end of the IIIrd century BC and the end of the IInd- the beginning of the Ist centuries BC. After a brief description of the fortifications, the author deals with the issue of their disappearance at the end of the IIIrd century BC - the beginning of IInd century BC, and he relates it to the coming of Bastarnae in the east of the Carpathians, and in the other areas, namely south of the Carpathians and in Dobruja, to an insecure climate created due to the migration of Scythians, the expansion of

¹ Vulpe 2004-2005.

the kingdom of Odrys, the Celtic invasion, and the conflicts with Hellenistic kings. Another issue discussed is the depopulation of the Wallachian Plain during the Ist century BC- Ist century AD. This could have had different causes, a change in the commercial routes, or the depreciations of the Danube as it becomes roman limes, leading to the movement of population to more appropriate areas.

The second section of this chapter deals with *Economic and craft activities*, namely agriculture, pottery production, iron metallurgy, non-ferrous metallurgy, as well as other handcrafts, and finally trade and coins.

To speak about agriculture, the author mentions both written sources and archaeological discoveries (carbonised seeds, tools) and also that an indirect evidence is represented by pottery. Animal breeding is proven by bones found in different complexes. Pottery production is given special attention, since it is the most common artefact found. It is noted that the problems with making a typology of ceramic shapes for the IIIrd-IInd centuries BC are due to the lack of a common terminology, the different classification systems existent, the small number of monographs, and the small number of sites covering the entire period. The author considers that the most useful criteria for pottery classification is the morphological one, the appearance of new shapes being easier to point out. Next, all ceramic forms are presented, for each being given a description, details about their origin, eventual sub-types, utility, territorial spreading and examples, with illustrations for each of them. Local products found in foreign complexes and foreign materials found in local complexes are also presented. As a conclusion, the author mentions that few observations can be made about the geographical spreading of a type, and that generally the forms seem to be equally spread.

The next occupation the author presents is iron metallurgy, starting with exploiting and manufacturing, describing the processes and possible workshops, continuing with tools and utility objects, weapons, each of them presented chronologically and geographically.

Talking about the non-ferrous metallurgy, the author remarks the little evidence about the exploiting and manufacture of precious metals, as opposed to the finished products found. He describes the

exploiting methods, possible workshops, after which he deals with the jewellery, namely fibulae (each type is described and illustrated), bracelets, as well as other pieces. Consequently there are some considerations about the monopoly on precious metals, considering the small number of golden objects discovered. One explanation could be the selling of gold south of the Danube, in exchange for silver or other products. Another possibility is the local fashion that would recommend a preference for silver. However, as the author says, the almost total lack of gold objects in the IIIrd century BC – the beginning of the Ist century BC cannot be explained by this alone. It could be a decrease of the economic power that had led to the disappearance of workshops. This is too a partial explanation, because other valuable goods were used and some settlements were prosperous. A more plausible explanation, as it is pointed out, is the monopoly over the exploiting, hand working and use of gold, associated with a concentration of coins and ornaments in the area of the capital. For the period before the Dacian kingdom the same can be applied, in the form of a monopoly of smaller power centres, that was enforced military or religiously.

The next part deals with other crafts, like stone carving, bone manufacture, glass, and their utility. The last section is about trade and coins. First of all the author speaks about the places where coins were discovered, and the type of coins used in different chronological phases, which he illustrates with appropriate maps. Considering the commerce, the author mentions that different factors should be researched: natural resources, commercial routes, workshops, products intended for exchange. The phenomenon is mostly assumed than clearly established. For the external commerce, as the author mentions, the proof is represented by the imported objects, as well as their content. The products change from one period to another, together with the commercial routes and the fashion. The role of the Danube is also mentioned.

The third section is the *Religious life*, which comprises discussions about the religious beliefs, traditional funerary practices and magic. Talking about the sacred geography, it is mentioned that archaeological evidences about the sacred mountain Kogaionon are lacking, but it is possible that the woods or water were natural places associated with a deity. Ritual pits are approached next, describing their typical inventory, with the mention that their significance can

only be supposed. Considering the appearance of the temples, it is mentioned that most of them had appeared at the end of the IInd century BC – beginning of the Ist century AD. The circular edifices with an apse room seem to be of Greek influence, but they could also follow a local model, originating in laic constructions. Rectangular edifices with an apse room are previous to the activity of Deceneu, and their disappearance at the end of the Ist century BC, and the appearance of circular edifices with an apse in the area of the capital can represent the elements of a religious control policy, to replace local traditional elements. Last of all, talking about the divinities, the author considers that there is no deity that can be connected to natural elements, the ritual pits or the temples, and that Zalmoxis represents a literary tradition that can no longer correspond to the realities of the IIIrd-IInd centuries BC.

The most important observation about the funerary practices is about the disappearance of the graves in the classical period of the Dacian kingdom, that, according to the author, can be connected to a stage in the research, but more likely it is a phenomenon of a historical nature, reflecting a change in funerary mentalities that occurred at the end of the IInd century BC, at the same time with the appearance of the first structures of the Dacian kingdom, leading to the conclusion that funerary changes are related to political and military ones. The author also connects the appearance and disappearance of temples with that of graves, considering they are part of the same phenomenon. The part dealing with magic presents anthropomorphic statues and zoomorphic statues, both of them with an unknown magical role, and maybe apotropaic purposes.

The fourth section is *Autochthons and allogens*. First of all, the author talks about *Dacians* which he considers an ethnonym that had a general character, being part of a generalization process, as it is the case for Greeks, Germanics, and Galls. The author explains that this generalization is based on a Greek or Roman perception that might be wrong, and it does not mean that there was a material, linguistic or political unity. This ethnonym had probably belonged to a tribe found near the Danube, familiar to the Romans in the Balkans. The ethnonym *Getae* appeared in sources from the Vth century BC, originating probably in the name of a tribe, but it was replaced in the Ist century BC by *Dacians*. As it is explained, it does not represent a real process of unification, but is a result of the Roman perspective on

the territories north of the Danube. The real ethnical situation can be established only with archaeological discoveries that are insufficient for now, so the author considers it more appropriate to use the term autochthons, for the Carpathian-Danubian territory. Next we find out about the allogens, the Celts and the Bastarnae, pointing out that their relationships with the locals can only be established by collaborating funerary information with those related to the habitat.

The last chapter presents the conclusions of the entire paper (p. 421-426), bringing together the partial conclusions presented at the end of each chapter and section. It is explained once again that although the archaeological discoveries appear to be numerous, most of them are just mentioning of pieces, and results of small archaeological campaigns, and the lack of details have led him to name this period "The Dark Age of Dacia".

Following the conclusions, there is a list of plates, an English abstract, a list of abbreviations, the bibliography and an index. Considering the technical part, the present book was published in great editorial conditions, with good drawings and a generally good writing, except for some typing errors that could have been avoided.

All in all, this paper represents a significant synthesis about the territories inhabited by the Dacians in the IIIrd-IInd centuries BC, bringing together important aspects concerning the habitat and funerary phenomenon, and pointing out the issues that are insufficiently researched and the problems encountered when dealing with this period.

Bibliography

- Vulpe 2004-2005 Al. Vulpe, *50 years of systematic archaeological excavations at the pre-and proto-historic site at Popești, Dacia NS, 48, 2004-2005*, p. 19-37.

Raluca-Eliza BĂTRÎNOIU
PhD Candidate, University of Bucharest, RO
E-mail: eliza_raluca@yahoo.com