
New sculptural monuments found in the Roman fort from Buciumi

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Cuvinte cheie: Buciumi, *aedicula* funerară, banchet funerar, Dacia Porolissensis.

The earliest information about the roman fort from Buciumi are dating since the Middle Ages, starting from the 11th-13th centuries. The ruins of the fort and the civilian settlement were an impressive landmark of the area, with an eloquent toponomy, the place is named nowadays „Grădiște”¹ and „Fortress”. At the end of the 16th century occurs the first documentary note of these, when it is mentioned that troops coordinated by John Bornemissa, sent on a mission against the Turkish-Tatar contingent in 1594, made their camp on the territory from Vármézo fort². The first archaeological mentions about the fort are made by K. Torma³, who makes a detailed description of the ruins, identifies the position of the *thermae*, and mentions an epigraphic discovery from the year 1863⁴. The next reference is about a sculptural discovery in the area in 1879, when a new inscription⁵ was discovered, possible from the fort area.

A ground identification was made by I. I. Russu in 1956, when measurements of the fort are made, for the first time⁶. The first excavations took place in 1963 and they continued until 1976, with the contribution, among others, of M. Macrea, E. Chirilă și N. Gudea. Researches performed during 1970-1976 remained unpublished.

The fort with an enclosure made of earth (128 x 160 m) was build by *coh. I Augusta Ituraeorum* and had the corners oriented considering the main cardinal points. The fortification is located north of Buciumi Commune, on the end of a plateau located between Sângiorz Valley and Lupu Valley, at about 3.5 km behind Crasna river gorge⁷. The fort with enclosure made of stone (134 x 167) was build by *coh. II Nervia Brittonum* at the beginning of 2nd century p. Chr. The importance of the fort is confirmed by the presence of a *statio* for consular beneficiaries, as it is attested by the inscription from a consular beneficar *P. Iulius Firmus*, dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus⁸.

The findings of sculptural pieces from this fort are only few. There are mentioned a series of pedestals, fragments of inscriptions, and fragments of columns. So far there were no sculptural objects of funerary nature discovered in the area.

The cemetery. Informations concerning this area were collected from Silviu Papiriu Pop, local collector of antiques, claiming that agricultural work in the early years after the socialist cooperativization disturbed the level

1 Russu 1959, p. 307.

2 Russu 1959, p. 308.

3 Torma 1864, p. 11-12.

4 CIL III 842.

5 CIL III 7645.

6 Russu 1959, p. 309.

7 Gudea 1997, p. 7.

8 Gudea 1997, p. 8.

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of the ancient Roman cemetery, due to the deep plowing with heavy iron plows pulled by tractors. The cemetery would have been in the north-eastern area from the fort and the vicus⁹.

1. Side wall from an *aedicula* (Pl. 1 a-b).

Discovery conditions: it was discovered in 2014, in trench S 10, on the latura praetoria around the tower no. 4. in the debris in front of the wall.

It is very likely a fragment of a right lateral wall from an *aedicula*. The fragment is extremely damaged, showing traces of impact during its discovery. It preserves the right side from the lower part of a relief register. Its dimensions are 50 x 28 x 12 cm. It was a wall with two registers on the inner side. From the relief there is still visible the bust of a character, of about 18 cm high, up to its neck and the hands (Pl. I a). The relief is delimited from the bottom of the wall, by a 5 cm wide moulding. The fact that its lower part doesn't show any traces of processing or some sort of epigraphic field, attests that the fragment is part of an *aedicula* wall. Since the monument ends at the bottom, being clearly shaped underneath, the character is placed in the lower register of the wall.

The character wears a *tunica manicata*, but the sleeve was already destroyed at the time of discovery (Pl. 1b). On the right shoulder it seems to have a towel, on his neck, as much as we can see, there seem to be the inferior folds of a *sagum*, clipped probably with a fibula, worn over the tunic. Definitely there is not a *torques*. This should have been placed around the neck, a *torques* of such dimensions, so large that it would have reached to the chest, it is unlikely. Under the mapa on his shoulder, in the lower part there are visible the tunic's folds. The right hand of the character is distinguishable from the shoulder down. He has the hand bent towards left, but his fingers are heavily damaged, so that are visible forefinger, the middle finger and little finger. Probably the index finger and the middle finger were higher, being directed towards the object held in his left hand. They are extremely roughly rendered. The left hand is barely visible, being heavily damaged, but apparently it holds between the fingers a cylindrical object, resembling a *volumen*. Even if it is difficult to say, it appears to be a male.

The appearance of the character represented as bust, on the inferior part of a *aedicula* wall, is an unusual occurrence for *aedicula* walls from Dacia. The best preserved analogies have the representations of busts in the upper register, as we see at Turda¹⁰ (Pl. 1, fig. 2). The appearance of a bust in the upper register is specific also for the workshops in Apulum¹¹ (pl. I, Fig. 3) from where an *aedicula* wall was found, or those from Micia¹², with three such representations. A possible analogy on what it concerns the arrangement of representation registers, was identified at a fragmentary wall from Micia¹³ (pl. I, fig. 4) where, in the lower register were two characters' busts.

Related with the character's gestures, with the right hand fingers directed over the *volumen* held in his left hand, there are some analogies on several monuments from Dacia Porolissensis, of which the most expressive is the posterior wall of *aedicula* from Zam-Sâncrai¹⁴ (fig. 5 detail), or another fragment found at Porolissum¹⁵ (fig. 6). It seems that this type of representation was extremely popular in the military world from Dacia Porolissensis.

In roman Dacia the *volumen* appears on about 19 monuments, most of them *aedicula* walls¹⁶. S. Chiş noticed the fact that the *volumen* and *theca calamaria* are attributes for parents, while the pens (*stili*) and bags (*crumena*) are attributes of children and usually only one character is wearing these symbols. Symbols of intellectual occupations have double function: one is for the posterity to transmit a certain image of the deceased as an intellectual during his life, and the second purpose is to show that the deceased was a servant of the Muses, patrons of intellectual occupations, from which he hopes that they will ensure immortality in the afterlife, as a reward for serving them¹⁷. The attitude of the man must have been a solemn one. The sculptor tried to imitate the way of rendering a character with *toga*, but lacking naturalness and clearly not understanding all elements of the mantle.

9 Gudea 1997, p. 64.

10 Floca, W. Wolski 1973, p. 14, nr. 34, fig. 45-46; L. Ţeposu-Marinescu 1982, p. 212, nr. 62, Pl. XXXVII.

11 C. Ciongradi 2007, p. 215-216, Ae/A 4a, Taf. 75 a-b.

12 C. Ciongradi 2007, p. 222-223, Ae/M14, M15, M16, Taf. 78.

13 C. Ciongradi 2007, p. 223, Ae/M19, Taf. 79 a-b.

14 L. Ţeposu-Marinescu 1982, p. 221, nr. 107, Pl. XLI.

15 Petruţ, Zăgreanu 2011, p. 208, nr. 30, pl. 4/30.

16 Chiş 2014, p. 162.

17 Chiş 2014, p. 163.