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CONTENTS

STUDIES

ANCIENT HISTORY

Arturo SANCHEZ SANZ

NOMADIC VS. SEDENTARY. GENDER, PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL EVOLUTION IN THE EASTERN EURASIAN STEPPE BETWEEN THE CHALCOLITHIC AND THE BRONZE AGE.....3

Antonio RUIZ SÁNCHEZ, Sebastián URIBE RODRÍGUEZ

THE GIANT'S TRAIL: MOBILITY AND EXCHANGE OF WHALES AND THEIR BY-PRODUCTS IN ANTIQUITY (1ST CENTURY BC-5TH CENTURY AD).....13

Roxana-Gabriela CURCĂ, Lucrețiu MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA

WOMEN IN MILITARY DIPLOMAS FROM MOESIA INFERIOR. A PRELIMINARY STUDY.....25

ARCHAEOLOGY

Marius-Mihai CIUȚĂ, Anamaria TUDORIE

NEW DATA ON THE CULTURAL HORIZON OF EARLY NEOLITHIC POLYCHROME POTTERY IN TRANSYLVANIA. THE 432A COMPLEX FROM THE LIMBA-OARDA DE JOS-SITE (ALBA COUNTY).....30

Stanislav GRIGORIEV

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOLAR AND VOLCANIC ACTIVITY AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURES OF EURASIA IN THE 4TH-1ST MILLENNIA BC.....44

Davut YİĞİTPAŞA, Orhan Alper ŞİRİN

AMISOS ANCIENT CITY EXCAVATION AND POTTERIES.....57

Boaz ZISSU, Amir GANOR, Rina AVNER, Alon KLEIN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND AT HORVAT MIDRAS, JUDEAN FOOTHILLS, ISRAEL.....86

Ovidiu ȚENȚEA, Vlad CĂLINA

ROMAN CAMPS IN ROMANIA. THE STATE OF RESEARCH.....127

Vitalie BÂRCĂ, Cristinel FÂNTÂNEANU, Anca MATIȘ, Cristian FLORESCU

ASPECTS OF THE FUNERARY RITE AND RITUAL IN THE SARMATAE CEMETERY OF TIMIȘOARA-HLADIK 1 (TIMIȘ COUNTY). PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.....166

Albina YERZHANOVA, Gulzada SARGIZOVA, Yeraly AKYMBEK

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND USE OF ANIMAL SCAPULAS IN TALDYSAI SETTLEMENT.....199

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

Bariş GÜR, Sinan MİMAROĞLU

MYCENAEAN FEMALE FIGURINE AND ZOOMORPHIC VESSEL IN THE AYASULUK HILL IN WESTERN ANATOLIA.....204

Yaşar ARLI

PORTRAIT TYPES OF THE EMPERORS OF THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY PRESERVED IN ANATOLIA.....214

Dávid PETRUȚ

CAMP DRESS OR PARADE ARMOUR? AN EQUESTRIAN OFFICER COMMEMORATED ON A FUNERARY RELIEF FROM BRÂNCOVENEȘTI.....224

MATYAS Jozsef

A ROMAN TILE WITH THE PRINT OF A PINCER.....234

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL AND REPORTS

Cristinel PLANTOS, Vitalie BÂRCĂ, Cristian Ioan POPA

AT THE BORDER. THE RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH OF CĂMIN (SATU MARE COUNTY).....240

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOPOGRAPHY

Florin-Gheorghe FODOREAN

MAPS OF ROMAN DACIA. VI. PHILLIPUS CLUVERIUS' MAP 'DACIARUM MOESIARUM ET THRACIAE VETUS ET NOVA DESCRIPTIO' (1629).....337

NUMISMATICS

Gabriel Mircea TALMAȚCHI

ARROWHEADS AND DOLPHINS: PRE-COINAGE MONETARY INSTRUMENTS FROM THE WESTERN BLACK SEA (5TH CENTURY BC).....341

REVIEWS

Roxana-Gabriela CURCĂ

ANNAMÁRIA-IZABELLA PÁZSINT, *PROSOPOGRAPHIA PONTI EUXINI. CALLATIS ET ODESSUS*, CLUJ-NAPOCA, MEGA PUBLISHING HOUSE, 2024, 308 P. ISBN: 978-606-020-707-8. ...348

Csaba SZABÓ

FEDERICA GATTO, FRANÇOISE VAN HAEPEREN (EDS.), *CULTES ET DIVINITÉS DANS LES CARRIÈRES ET LES MINES DE L'EMPIRE ROMAIN*, COLLECTION FERVET OPUS 10, PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRES DE LOUVAIN: LOUVAIN, 2023, 240P. ISBN: 978-2-39061-415-9.....350

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The present volume is the result of an international workshop organised by the Catholic University of Louvain (31st March – 1st April 2022) on the same topic. The main aim of the event and this volume was to fill the research gap on Roman religion in the quarries and mining districts of the empire, as one of the most particular professional groups of the ancient society of Rome. As there are few monographies and collections of studies focusing exclusively on the religious life and habits of professional groups (mostly from the military), the aim of this volume is indeed much appreciated.

Mining communities represent even today a particular sociological and anthropological group within the society.

Their settlements, social habits, group-formation, and collective identities are interdependent with the nature, the mines, and the underground world. It is a particular relationship with a dangerous, risky, and invasive activity, where superstition, individual, religious forms and vernacular religion even today produce unique rituals and habits¹. This, sociological and anthropological aspect of the mining communities are not discussed, although would be important to reflect on such details too, even if the ancient sources are rare on this issue.

The introduction of the volume presents shortly the history of research on Roman religion of mining communities, citing some of the major works on Roman mining, however the bibliography evoked is far from being complete. For Alburnus Maior – one of the most well-known and best preserved



¹ On the opening ceremony of the largest underground tunnel (Gotthard Base Tunnel) see: MARSHALL 2022 and PEZZOLI-OLGIATI 2024.

subterranean Roman mines – we can't find in the bibliography the paradigmatic works of Volker Wollmann (neither in the introduction, nor the study of Hirt focusing on the very same topic)². The introduction is followed by two main subchapters, the first four studies focusing on religion of the quarries the second on the mines (the last five studies).

The first study by Federico Frasson is focusing on the votive inscriptions associated with the marble quarries of the Roman colony of Luna, south of the modern settlement of Carrara. The study presents in detail the ex-voto dedications for Jupiter and Silvanus, often associated with the quarries. The dedications for Silvanus are usually presented in form of figurative votive monuments (reliefs). The author presents these monuments and the inscriptions (mostly dedicated by slaves and freedmen) with an abundant bibliography; however, the reader can't find the entire inscription in the text, only the references to the main corpora (no transcription of the texts, which seems to be a general feature of the volume).

The study of Federica Gatto, one of the editors of the volume is focusing on votive inscriptions related to the activity of the *officinae* of quarries³. She argues – as in many of her previous studies – that the mining activities had several “functional” divinities related to the different processes and the nature of the mining activity (Terra Mater related to the earth works, Neptunus to the water sources, Mercurius to the transportation, etc.). The study examines the nature of the tutelary divinities of various mining *officinae*. The study begins with the epigraphic material of Luna, the same material presented in the previous study followed by the presentation of divinities associated with the mining *officinae* in the different imperial estates. Silvanus from Saint Béat, Korálpe, Arulis, Wadi Hammamat, Wadi Umm Wikala (associated with Pan), Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Hercules Saxanus from Brohl, Rashoe and Norroy.

The study of Diana Gorostidi Pi, Anna Gutiérrez Garcia and Jordi López Vilar presents two of the recently identified monumental niches at the El Mèdol quarries in the eastern part of Tarraco. The impressive stone quarry is one of the most well-preserved quarries in the Roman Empire and it is the first evidence for religious practices right in the quarry itself. The two relatively large niches in the North-Western part of the quarry are like those found at the Brohl valley dedicated to Hercules Saxanus. Although there were no inscriptions found in the niches, the authors collect the known inscriptions and the attested divinities (especially the importance of Silvanus).

Gian Luca Gregori presents in his article the cult of Mercurius around Brescia, arguing that the economic prosperity of the city can be related to the extraction activities and quarries in the vicinity. The article focuses on the social groups (especially the urban and senatorial elite) related to the commercial use and production of limestone and marble monuments (quarries in Botticino and the case study of the sanctuary at Sant'Eufemia).

The next five chapters are focusing on aspects of Roman religion in the mining districts. The study of Christophe Flament is focusing on the pantheon of the Laurion (Greece)

mining district. What makes special this region, is that in contrast with many other archaeological sites and regions, here one can rely not only on the epigraphic and archaeological material, but also on literary sources too. The author presents those short passages, where the mining activity from Laurion is mentioned (although most of them are from pre-Roman periods). Flament also presents the theophoric denominations of the mines with an impressive list of names preserved on inscriptions. The article analyses also the divinities associated with sanctuaries mentioned directly in the mines and on other, epigraphic sources.

The study of Alfred Hirt is focusing on the pantheon of the mining communities of Alburnus Maior in the context of the urban religion of Ampelum and Apulum, the two major towns in the region. Hirt argues, that the pantheon of the Illyrian communities is influenced not only by their cultural and professional background as miners, but also by the religious hegemony and impact of the two large settlements of the region. Hirt rightly argued, that the influence of Medieval religiosity of the miners could influence the researchers of the 1980s and 1990s. He shifted the focus of the research on the idea, that the political and economic hubs of the golden district and Dacia Superior (Ampelum and Apulum) had actually a stronger impact on the communities and not necessarily their professional role. This idea seems to be plausible, although it worth also emphasizing the isolated nature of these communities (linguistic, cultural) and the presence of some unique divine attestations in Alburnus Maior which indicates the cultural identity of the Dalmatian communities.

The detailed study of Antonio Ibba is focusing on the case study of Sardinia in a longue durée perspective from 200 BC till the early Medieval Ages (7–8th century AD). His study presents the topography and the various epigraphic evidence (preserved in several languages, such as Punic, Greek, Latin) related to the mines and quarries of the island.

Linda Gosner's article presents the funerary practices and commemoration rituals in the so-called Iberian Pyrite Belt in the southwest part of the provinces of Lusitania and Boetica. She identified some of the unusual features, objects and rituals related to the graveyards of the mining communities in this region.

Finally, the last study of the volume by Almudena Orejas, Inés Sastre, Francisco Javier Sánchez-Palencia and Brais Xosé Currás presents 53 case studies (votive inscriptions) of indigenous population and their religious dedications in the north-western part of Iberia.

The volume represents a rich collection of case studies from various provinces (predominantly Iberia and Dacia, two of the richest provinces in mining resources). The volume does not intend to present a comprehensive overview of quarries and mines and all the votive material attested in the vicinity of these: such an aim would need a long-term project and as the local case studies, as Roman Dacia shows, mapping the marble and stone quarries are still an ongoing work in Roman provincial archaeology⁴. Several provinces, such as Dalmatia or Moesia Superior, where mines and quarries were also attested are not represented in the volume. The

² WOLLMANN 1996.

³ The study summarizes the research project of the author entitled „*Les dieux honorés dans les mines et les carrières de l'Empire romain*” (PDR T023419F).

⁴ This was partially collected in HIRT 2010.

proceedings edited by Federica Gatto and Françoise Van Haepere represents a unique and very useful initiative focusing for the first time on the religious life of the mining communities in the Roman Empire.

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