

Ovidiu Țentea (with the contribution of Corina Ionescu, Lucreția Ghergari, Mihai Dima, Valentin Voișian), *Bath and bathing at Alburnus Maior/Băile romane de la Alburnus Maior*, Mega Publishing House, pp. 225, ISBN: 978-606-543-429-5

The most recent volume of Ovidiu Țentea represents a number of seven studies concentrated on the subject of one of the most important Roman mining areas from the Danubian provinces, but not only: *Alburnus Maior* (Roșia Montană). The central point of the studies are the archaeological excavations of the Roman baths from Carpeni Hill. The excavations were carried out between 2000 and 2003¹ as part of larger national research program called 'Alburnus Maior'. The book it is by itself an interdisciplinary study that includes connected topics from terminology, epigraphy, military studies, religion, numismatics, mineralogical - geological studies on the tegular material and 3D modelling applied on archaeological contexts, becoming this way a step forward in understanding the functional levels of the Romanized Dalmatian mining settlement from *Alburnus Maior*. Also, the volume comes with a bilingual (English – Romanian) format.

In the first study, *History of archaeological research on Carpen Hill* (9-12, 97-100), the author is making an excursus through the history of the findings, starting with the second half of the 18th century due to the intensified mining activities in the area which led to an increasing number of artefacts. The map made by F. Prošepny in the second half of the 19th century is very important in the context of mapping the archaeological areas of *Alburnus Maior*.

One of the key points was the inclusion of some epigraphic monuments in the repertory made by Theodor Mommsen in 1875. Later, several inscription were found in the area of the Carpeni Hill by some locals together with a relatively high number of archaeological material. Within the 20th century, some excavation were carried out, identifying a structure with hypocaust and also a brick with the stamp of legion *XIII Gemina*. The archaeological research from 2000-2003 established that on the Carpeni Hill area there are composed of two buildings with *hypocaustum* facility an area with houses, a group of graves and some inscriptions which attest a cult area and some *colegia*.

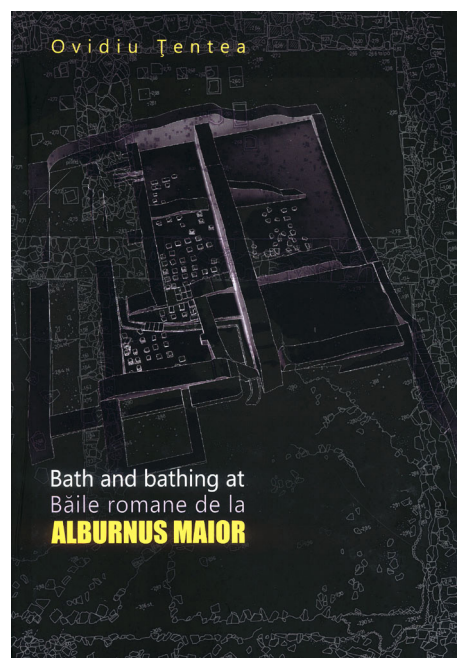
The second study is orbiting around two main themes, *Terminological notes on the Roman baths and their state of research in Roman Dacia* (13-20, 101-108). The author discusses in a few sentences the genesis of the public baths in the Roman world, and the main distinctions between the legionary *thermae* from fortresses and the small *balnea* belonging to auxiliary forts, following mainly the arguments of Luise Revell, reinforced by epigraphic arguments. The second part of the study is an overview of the archaeological situation of the Roman baths from Dacia. In the last paragraphs, the author suggests that the 'classic' bathing circuit *Frigidarium-Tepidarium-Caldarium* was based on an organization near the *prefurnium* structure, maximizing the efficiency of the bath structure, an explanation for the *preponderance of circular baths, especially of those located in smaller communities*'.

The third part of the book represents the core of the study, mainly the archaeological research from *The Roman baths at Alburnus Maior, Carpeni Hill*

¹ For the archaeological reports see mainly P. DAMIAN (ed.), *Alburnus Maior I*, CIMEC, 2003.

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(21-42, 109-130). Through the National Research Program 'Alburnus Maior' were discovered an area with houses, two areas with graves and the abovementioned buildings with hypocaust, E1 and E2 the second one being in the center of this preliminary report. The systematic research of the E2 building during 2002-2003 surprised an undesirable situation of destructive interventions carried out during the 60' excavations which destroyed almost all of the stratigraphic sequences.

After two years of excavations, the results are quite astonishing. Building E2 is a square building with the dimensions of 17, 50 x 19, 50, oriented EV – NS, the walls being made in the *opus incertum* technique, (stone, chalk mixed with brick fragments) with three construction and repair phases. In the first phase the author identified at least three chambers connected to a *hypocaust* installation and a smaller service room for the *prefurnium* stoke-holes; it was also identified another chamber 'where a cold water pool might have functioned...'. In the second phase of the building the walls were been rebuilt, being a little bit thinner than the walls of phase one. The structure is extended to west. There were identified five chambers. In the last phase of the *thermae*, there is a different public building with a totally different partitioning of the chambers. The main theory regarding this later phase is that the bath was taken out of service, a new building with unknown functionality being erected over the old structure.

In the last part of the third study, the author presents the stamped ceramic building material found during the archaeological excavation. (Types *LEG XIII*, *LEG XIII G*, *LEG XIII GE*, a stamp with the name of *P(ublius)*, *CL(odius/laudianus)* *D(...)*). The chapter ends with a well-organized catalogue containing the archaeological material: coins, votive altars, pottery, iron objects, bronze objects, glass objects and construction material.

A consistent part of the book is represented by the fourth chapter regarding the defence of *aurariae Daciae* (43-52, 131-140), in which the author highlights the imperial policy of protection the gold mining area from Apuseni Mountains. The main idea is that the defence of the mining area of Apuseni is largely overlapped by the Western defence of the Dacian *limes*. In the neighbouring area there is know a small fortlet at Abrud, probably a *burgus* judging after its location (and some newly identified towers, West of the mining area). The military presence is attested at *Ampelum* (Zlatna) by epigraphic sources, being know a *vexillatio* of *legio XIII Gemina* from *Apulum* and a later *numerus Maurorum Hispanensium*.

In the author's opinion, the defence of *aurariae Daciae* and the Wester sector of the Dacian *limes* falls into the attributions of the 13th legion and from the Marcomanic Wars on, the tasks are divided with *legio V Macedonica* transferred at *Potaissa* (Turda). One of the main roles of the only *ala miliaria* from Roman Dacia quartered at Războieni, from time of Hadrian, was to secure the mining area from Apuseni Mountains and Western *limes*, using the fast road from the Arieș valley. (the author states that also the *ala I Siliana* could fulfill this task). Also, a very good observation is that the mining area and the main military centers are interconnected through a road system that facilitates

military movement to the exposed areas.

The next chapter opens the discussion about the cult of *Silvanus* in the mining area of *Alburnus Maior* (53-60, 141-148) During the excavation at the E2 building were found two inscriptions dedicated to *Silvanus*.² The archaeological context led the authors of the excavations to conclude that after the decommissioning of the baths, the last phase of the building could probably serve as a place for devotion. Yet, the main idea is that the epigraphic monuments dedicated to *Silvanus* with the epithets *Augustus* and *Domesticus* are hiding an *interpretatio Illyrica* of a divinity originated in the Dalmatian area.

The last but one study of the book is considering the numismatic finds from *Alburnus Maior*. (61-68, 149-156). As the authors states, there is a large number of numismatic finds, most of the coins being poorly conserved. There are over 120 coins but only 19 are discovered in a habitation context. From E2 building there are 13 coins starting with the Flavian dynasty and ending with a coin dated probably in the time of Iulia Mamaea, the chronological frame being correlated with the rest of the numismatic finds from *Alburnus Maior*.

An interesting fact spotted by the authors is that there is quite different evolution between *Alburnus Maior* and *Ampelum* regarding the currency. If at *Alburnus Maior* the coins indicates a circulation from Vespasian to Antoninus Pius with the most coins dated in the time of Hadrian, at *Ampelum* more de 40% of the coins are dated between the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Philippus Arabs and no coin from Hadrian. The authors noted that the use of coins at *Alburnus Maior* is chronologically connected with the dating of the tablets: 131-167.

The last chapter leads the story of *Alburnus Maior* into the sphere of geological and mineralogical studies of 22 bricks found at *Alburnus Maior* and *Apulum* (69-90, 157-178). The range of analyses incudes granulometry and fineness, the mineralogical and petrographical composition, polarized light microscopy, X-Ray diffraction and discussion regarding thermal transformation of mineral phases, and raw materials and firing conditions.

The Plates section is including maps and photos made during the excavations, archaeological drawings of profiles and phases, the two inscriptions, coins, brick stamps, microscopic photos and a well-documented 3D reconstructions of the phases with high quality visualization mode.

By its compositions and its quality, this collection of articles regarding the mining area of *Alaburnus Maior* leads us to a different level of understanding this bordering area of activity and also to new questions.

² *Silv[a]no* / *Augusto* / *sacrum v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) l(aetus) vel. v(otum) s(olverunt) l(ibentes) l(aeti)*.

Silvano / *Domesti(co)* / *Helius* / *v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*.