

Dávid Petruț, *Pottery and Military Life. The Ceramic Assemblages from the Barracks of the Auxiliary Fort at Buciumi, Dacia Porolissensis*. Studii și cercetări asupra frontierelor Imperiului roman de pe teritoriul României, vol. 4, Cluj Napoca, Mega Press, 2018, 198 p. ISBN 978-606-020-043-7.

Dr. Dávid Petruț is a lecturer at the Faculty of History and Philosophy of Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca. His main research interests include Roman provincial archaeology, Roman material culture, daily life in the Roman military, Roman funerary art as well as the history of archaeology in Transylvania. In 2018, Petruț has also co-edited "The Atlas of Roman Pottery Workshops from the Provinces Dacia and Lower Moesia/Scythia Minor (1st-7th centuries AD)".

The book presented here, "Pottery and Military Life. The Ceramic Assemblages from the Barracks of the Auxiliary Fort at Buciumi, Dacia Porolissensis", exhibits the results of his PhD research carried out between 2010 and 2014 at Babeș-Bolyai University, namely his study of the ceramic findings from the barracks of the Buciumi auxiliary fort in Dacia Porolissensis, focusing particularly on material from 1971 – 1976.

In the first chapter, Petruț defines the study of the 'everyday life' of the Roman soldier. He discusses the trends and evolution of the research concerning the Roman military, emphasizing a shift from regarding soldiers as mere fighting units to studying them on a more personal level. The study of their everyday life can be classified into various aspects, namely the *supply of goods, military architecture and use of space, military production (manufacture and crafts), military diet and conviviality, daily routine and recurrent activities and aspects of military identity*. Petruț exhibits different points of view pertaining to the topic and successfully observes the limitations and biases of earlier studies which occasionally hinder contemporary research in the field.

The second chapter stresses the importance of sub-literary sources, such as wax tablets, ink tablets, ostraca and papyri, in the research concerning the soldiers' life. Different types of military documents as well as the military daily life are succinctly but clearly outlined in the chapter, advancing the idea that soldiers had reached uniformity to some extent in the way in which they self-administered.

The third chapter, albeit brief, presents the auxiliary fort at Buciumi and the history of its research, from the earliest observations in the 19th century by Károly Torma to the systematic archaeological excavations in 1963 – 1976. Finally, the last two subsequent excavations from 1997 and 2015 are also documented.

The fourth chapter introduces the pottery assemblages found at Buciumi between 1971 – 1976. Petruț presents a classification system and gives an overview of the pottery from the barracks, focusing on shapes connected to food and drink preparation and consumption, while also including other vessels used in everyday life for personal hygiene, artificial lighting and ritual activities among the soldiers. The chapter also includes a concise review of the pottery assemblage presented in the 1972 monograph, describing the latter as one of the earliest attempts to collect valid data about ceramics in a military context in Dacia. Lastly, the text assesses functional aspects of the findings, among which culinary practices and conviviality, both of which were treated rather briefly.

The fifth chapter discusses the small finds from the barracks, which demonstrate a variety of activities taking place at the site related to metalworking, textile-working, religious ritual and different fighting techniques.

The analysis is followed by a series of drawings and photographs of the findings which are for the most part clear and serve their purpose, except for a few cases where the illustrations from older studies are more difficult to perceive due to their quality. Nonetheless, the book also presents some good detail photos of the findings, especially of the ceramic fabric types, which perfectly illustrate their texture and inclusions. In terms of the presentation of the findings, each type of vessel and its functionality is defined and explained in an easy-to-understand manner. The content is overall well-organized and rendered in such a way that it could be accessible to field experts and non-experts alike.

While the study was subject to some limitations due to the very fragmentary nature of the assemblage examined by the author, as well as the latter's working constraints, I consider that the book nevertheless achieved its purpose to a great extent. Overall, the book provides a comprehensible assessment of the findings and their functionality, enriching our knowledge of Roman soldiers' daily lives at the Buciumi fort.

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