

PIETROASELE – THE EDIFICE WITH *HYPOCAUSTUM*. EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF *LEGIO XI CLAUDIA*

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Abstract: The systematic researches between 1976-2009 inside the edifice with hypocaustum in Pietroasele, have revealed a total of 17 bricks and tiles bearing the inscription of the *legio XI Claudia*. The article describes the epigraphic material and analyzes it in the context of the discoveries belonging to the *legio XI Claudia* in Walachia. We identified 5 different types of stamps framed during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD of which 3 are singular to date on the territory of Walachia.

Rezumat: Cercetările dintre anii 1976-2009 în cadrul edificiului cu hypocaust de la Pietroasele au scos la lumină un număr de 17 cărămizi și țigle purtând indicativul legiunii a XI-a Claudia. Articolul descrie exhaustiv materialul tegular de la Pietroasele și îl analizează în contextul descoperirilor aparținând legiunii a XI-a Claudia din Muntenia. Sunt identificate 5 tipuri diferite de ștampile, încadrabile pe parcursul sec. II-III d. Hr., dintre care 3 singulare până în prezent pe teritoriul Munteniei.

The accidental discovery of an important hoard from the Age of migrations, nearby Pietroasa village, in the spring of 1873, was the starting point of interest for ancient relics in this place (nowadays Pietroasele, Buzău County). So, the name of Alexandru Odobescu, the one who devoted a monograph to the hoard discovered in Pietroasa, named “*Le trésor de Pétrossa. Étude sur l’orfèvrerie antique*”, structured in three volumes and printed in Paris between 1889-1900, has been linked with the first field research conducted on the Istrița hill area in 1866. On this occasion, among the existing houses in the village center, Odobescu managed to identify the stone walls of a rectangular fortification (approximate 130 x 160 m) and to undertake the first archaeological surveys inside it. These researches,¹ which led Odobescu to the assumption that Caucaland was here, where the Visigoths of Athanarich’s had settled in the second part of the 4th century AD, those who had held the famous treasure in his opinion, remained singular for more than a hundred years. Although, field researches in Pietroasa fortification (*castrum*) weren’t made until 1973, the issue about its role and the moment of its construction raised questions along the time. In this context, the main problem was the one related to the moment of its construction, the scientific dispute being divided around two hypotheses. The first one said that the fortification was built during Traian’s Dacian wars,² among the series of fortifications from the Walachia’ sub-Carpathians, while the second said that the moment of its construction needs to be related to the reign of Constantine the Great and to his actions of reintegration within the empire’s borders of the northern Danube territories, in the first part of the 4th century AD.³

The systematic research started in 1973⁴ and continued with interruption until nowadays, have partly cleared up the problems about this fortification because of the impossibility to research some large areas inside and near the fortification, overlapping areas of current housing, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, unfortunately, because of the incomplete and inconclusive publishing of the research results along the time (the archaeological material was presented by categories of objects, without mentioning the levels and the complexes they had proceeded from, while the open sections were only briefly described, without submitting the plans).⁵

In 1976, at the same time with the fortification research, it was made a first check in a wall construction,

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¹ Odobescu 1976, pp. 727-729.

² Ștefan 1948, p. 142; Tudor 1958, pp. 143-144; Macrea 1960, p. 349; Florescu 1968, pp. 31-38; Madgearu 2008, p. 63.

³ Vulpe 1952, p. 217; Dunăreanu-Vulpe 1967, pp. 47-49; Tudor 1978, p. 162; Diaconu 1980, pp. 1063-1069.

⁴ The research team was initially formed by researchers from the Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest (Gh. Diaconu – scientific responsible, Ioana Cătănicu, Magda Tzony) and from Buzău County Museum (Vasile Drâmbocianu and Eugen Marius Constantinescu).

⁵ The point of view of the main research author, Gh. Diaconu, was expressed many time, and every time the fortification was chronologically framed in the 4th century AD. For the research results and author’s argumentation see Diaconu 1975, p. 411-414; Diaconu 1976, pp. 1056-1064; Diaconu *et al.* 1977, pp. 199-220; Diaconu *et al.* 1979, pp. 319-320; Diaconu 1981, pp. 35-40; Diaconu, Tzony 1983, pp. 69-77.