

# THE CISTERN AT SARMIZEGETUSA REGIA (GRĂDIȘTEA DE MUNTE, HUNEDOARA COUNTY). THE POTTERY<sup>1</sup>

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**Keyword:** Sarmizegetusa Regia, cistern, vessels, household ware, cooking ware, lamps, amphorae, Laténè pottery, Roman pottery.

**Abstract:** This study presents the Dacian and Roman pottery discovered in the cistern excavated between 1990 and 1996 at Sarmizegetusa Regia–Grădiștea de Munte. From the perspective of Dacian pottery, the study represents a step forward in understanding pottery production in the capital of the Dacian Kingdom and, implicitly, the specifics of this craft in the Orăștie Mountains area, the core of the Dacian Kingdom, on the eve of the Roman conquest. The presentation of the Roman pottery brings a significant contribution to the understanding of the early stages of Roman rule in Dacia, enhancing and refining the information available regarding the Roman presence in the capital of the Dacian kingdom.

**Rezumat:** Este prezentat materialul ceramic dacic și roman din cisterna descoperită la Sarmizegetusa Regia – Grădiștea de Munte, cercetată în anii 1990-1996. Din perspectiva materialului ceramic dacic studiul reprezintă o etapă în cunoașterea producției de vase ceramice din capitala regatului dac și, implicit, ce este specific acestui meșteșug în zona munților Orăștiei, centrul de greutate al regatului dac, în zorii cuceririi romane. În ce privește materialul ceramic roman descoperit în cisternă, prezentarea lui are un aport semnificativ la cunoașterea începuturilor stăpânirii romane în Dacia, augmentând și nuanțând informațiile privind prezența romană în capitala regatului dac.

## I. Introduction

The aim of the study is to present the Dacian and Roman pottery from a closed complex, functional within a narrow time frame researched in Sarmizegetusa Regia–Grădiștea de Munte in 1990-1996.<sup>2</sup> The presence of both Dacian and Roman pottery within the same deposition layers inside this complex naturally supports their joint presentation.

From the perspective of Dacian pottery, the study represents a step forward in understanding pottery production in the capital of the Dacian Kingdom and, implicitly, the specifics of this craft in the Orăștie Mountains area, the heart of the Dacian Kingdom, on the eve of the Roman conquest. There is, as yet, no corpus or catalogue of ceramic forms specific to Sarmizegetusa Regia, thus the presentation of the ceramic material from the cistern is an important step toward its creation.<sup>3</sup>

An overview of what is currently known about pottery production in the area of the Orăștie Mountains and Sarmizegetusa Regia reveals the necessity and relevance of presenting this material. The ceramic vessels discovered on sites in the Orăștie Mountains are relatively little known compared to the large volume of material uncovered there to date. Mentions of special artifacts and reproductions of such goods can be found in excavation reports<sup>4</sup> and monograph works presenting the fortifications and settlements in that area.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Over a decade ago, I received permission from Professor Ioan Glodariu, the head of scientific research on the fortifications and settlements in the Orăștie Mountains, to process the ceramic material discovered in the cistern at Sarmizegetusa Regia–Grădiștea de Munte. It was a long journey, one that I undertook step by step alongside Gabriela Gheorghiu, one of the archaeologists who researched this complex.

<sup>2</sup> In order to ensure the smooth flow of the text, both names will be used separately: the ancient name of the site, Sarmizegetusa Regia, and the present-day name of the village, Grădiștea de Munte, where the ancient site is located.

<sup>3</sup> The reconstruction of vessels forms, their typology, functionality, and, naturally, their chronology are the main objectives of specialists involved in the study of pottery discovered in the capital of the Dacian Kingdom. (Florea 1994a, p. 60; Cristescu 2012, p. 68).

<sup>4</sup> Among these, one should mention: Teodorescu 1929, pp. 265-268, fig. 16; Daicoviciu *et alii* 1953, pp. 153-196, figs. 17-18, 35-38; Daicoviciu *et alii* 1955, pp. 195-204; Daicoviciu *et alii* 1957, pp. 255-277, figs. 2/1-6; 6; Daicoviciu C. *et alii* 1973, pp. 62-86, fig. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Among these, one should mention: Daicoviciu 1954, pp. 96-114, pls. XVII-XXII; Glodariu *et alii* 1988, pp. 101, 245-245, figs. XVI, XVII, XLIX.