

MARISIA

Studii și materiale

XXXIV–XXXV

Arheologie



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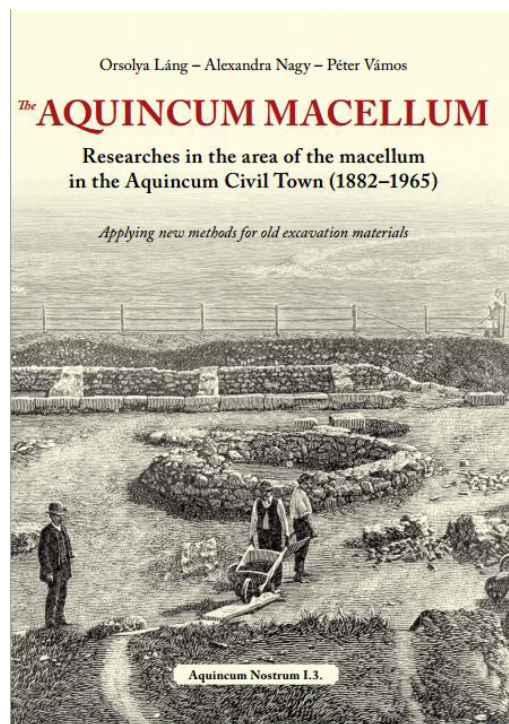
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Orsolya Láng – Alexandra Nagy – Péter Vámos, *The Aquincum Macellum. Researches in the area of the macellum in the Aquincum Civil Town (1882-1965). Applying news methods for old excavation materials.* Aquincum Nostrum I.3., Budapest, 2014. 198 pages, 44 tables.

Book review by Lóránt VASS

There are several occasions when archaeologists confronts serious methodological and interpretative problems when trying to re-evaluate the results of former, so-called “old” excavations. These excavations, carried out usually in the beginning of the last century or even earlier, reflect in general the current state of art, methodology and interpretation trends characteristic for the respective period. The different research methods, the slight focus on details and different aims of the old excavations, especially in the case of structures, buildings, provoke serious headache for future researches (missing or incomplete documentation, photos, records etc.). In these situations archaeologists try to rely on the latest results of fieldwork and investigations, and partially neglect the older investigations resulting thus an unfilled gap in the state of art. Fortunately, this unhappy situation is not valid for the archaeological synthesis of the *macellum* complex at Aquincum. One of the greatest merit of the present monograph is the considerable effort to link the results of the old investigations to the current interpretative and more refined research methods. The authors of the monograph are all specialists of the Aquincum Museum from Budapest with large expertise in the respective research domain. The collaboration of Orsolya Láng as an expert in the archaeology and urban development of the Civil Town from Aquincum, Péter Vámos, specialist of the ceramic production at Aquincum and Alexandra Nagy, researcher of the stamped pottery production from the same settlement resulted in a very complex analysis of the problematic. One should not forget the useful contribution of archaeozoologist Anna Biller either whose study on the archaeozoological material from the respective area conferred a strong interdisciplinary character to the research.

As reflected in the title, the book presents the scientific evaluation of one the most emblematic urban complexes within the Roman Civil Town from Aquincum: the *macellum* and its area. Market places of provincial settlements in the western and Danubian provinces of the Empire are quite rare. For this reason, the researched area might claim for a distinct attention, although the period of the *macellum* is the least known chronological unit in the history of the whole area.



On the other hand, this area of the Civil Town is the most intensively researched zone within Aquincum. Researches embrace a long period of time between 1882-1965, thus the accumulation of information and observations is considerable. Situated along the northern main road in the Civil Town, in a much agglomerated urban zone, the area of the *macellum* was an intensively used territory during time which was observed also by the former excavations. While the excavation of Bálint Kuzsinszky from 1882-1884 deals only with the building of the *macellum*, the *tholos* in centre housing the weights, and the fragment of an over life size gilded bronze statue, the archaeological researches carried out by Lajos Nagy in 1929 or Melinda Kaba in 1960-1962 identified other features (e.g. possible pottery workshop, pits, post-holes, wall fragments) too that existed before the period of the *macellum*. The most complex chronology of the area, however, was given by Klára Póczy. Based on her excavation in 1965, she delimited different phases of the land use beginning with a period earlier than the first half of the 2nd c. A.D until the 4th c. A.D. The authors of the monographs, however, did not take for granted

the archaeological reports and interpretation, and they revised every single archaeological information from the documentation of these excavations, collecting the different pieces of informations in a single and standard system. As suggested in the subtitle of the monograph (*Applying news methods for old excavation materials*), the old excavation methods and results were transferred into an up-to-date, “new” field of interpretation. Thus, every archaeological feature was given a standard stratigraphical unit number (SU) and the relation between these contexts was established by a complex Harris-type matrix (chapter 8). As a result of this effort, a much larger chronological seriation could have been defined, delimiting seven different phases of the area. As a matter of fact, the construction of the *macellum* can be dated to the phase 5, in the second half of the 3rd c. A.D. which represent one of the latest land use phase of the parcel and with the smallest quantity of recorded archaeological material.

The book is composed of thirteen chapters which cover all aspects related to the researched area and the archaeological material found within its perimeter: 1. *Introduction* (p. 5-7); 2. *History of research* (p. 7-13); 3. *Methods of the works – excavation documentations* (p. 13-15); 4. *Excavations in the area of the macellum* (p. 15-24); 5. *The problem of identifying the pottery workshop and storeroom in the macellum area* (p. 33-38); 6. *Considerations for the analysis and identification of finds* (p. 39-43); 7. *Finds* (p. 43-47); 8. *Architectural and chronological conclusions* (p. 77-89); 9. *Abbreviations* (p. 89-91); 10. *Bibliography* (p. 91-101); 11. *Catalogue of objects* (p. 101-139); 12. *Appendix* (p. 139-143); 13. *Tables* (p. 153-198).

After a short introduction, chapter 2 summarizes the researches and excavations carried out in the area, presenting the results and the exact location of each campaign. The detailed presentation of the different site documentations can be found in chapter 4 where all data are critically reevaluated. The data offered by the old excavations are followed by a wide discussion concerning the existence of a pottery workshop in the area of the *macellum* as it was handled earlier by Lajos

Nagy and Klára Póczy (chapter 5) as a certainty. Based on the close examination of all the possible ceramic waste material and finished products the authors are, however, more precautious in this matter, claiming that no direct evidence could be pointed out – on the basis of the find material – for the existence of a workshop in the perimeter of the *macellum*, and the kiln unearthed during these excavation cannot be used as proofs in this context. According to the authors the large quantity of ceramic products of the same type, could argue, instead, in the benefit of a storeroom or shop in this area that might be supported by the commercial character of the respective zone, too. Chapter 6 contains the methodological basis of the find processing, focusing only on the ceramic material. The following chapter (chapter 7) is a hard attempt to identify and analyze the find material from different archaeological campaigns. The emphasis, however, falls almost exclusively on the pottery finds which are widely discussed and presented, while small finds of other material are only briefly described, without any thorough analysis. This could partially be explained with the preference of the authors for ceramic vessel products, as part of their main field of research. On the other hand, the scarce number of small finds permit only farfetched conclusions. The synthesis of the old and new results, one can find in the last descriptive chapter (chapter 8) where the archaeological finds are precisely correlated to the consecutive phases and a larger chronology is created.

The elegant monograph, both aesthetic and in quality, of the Hungarian archaeologists is a noteworthy synthesis of different archaeological interpretations in time and a very good example for the current need to reevaluate older results in a very modern, up-to-date manner. It may also serve as a good model for future researches based on older investigations as it uses a standard and perseverant methodology both in find processing and in the evaluation of the documentations. On the other hand, the present monograph is the first exhaustive publication of the famous *macellum* area at Aquincum, and in this respect it will, hopefully, benefit from large interest in the Roman provincial research.

ABBREVIATIONS

Acta	Acta. Anuarul Muzeului Național Secuiesc și al Muzeului Secuiesc al Ciucului, Sf. Gheorghe
ActaAntPhilippo	Acta Antiqua Philippopolitana, Sophia
ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
ActaHistSzeged	Acta Historica. Acta Universitatis Scientiarum Szegediensis, Szeged
ActaMM	Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis, Vaslui
ActaMilMed	Acta Militaria Mediaevalia, Sanok
ActaMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca
ActaMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău
ActaSic	Acta Siculica, Sf. Gheorghe/Sepsiszentgyörgy
Aluta	Aluta, Sf. Gheorghe
AnB	Analele Banatului, Timișoara
Apulum	Apulum. Acta Musei Apulensis, Alba Iulia
ArbFberSächs	Arbeits- und Forschungsberichte zur sächsischen Bodendenkmalpflege, Dresden
ArchÉrt	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest
ArchKözl	Archaeologiai Közlemények, Budapest
Aregia	Alba Regia. Annales Musei Stephani Regis, Székesfehérvár
Areopolisz	Areopolisz. Történelmi és társadalomtudományi tanulmányok, Székelyudvarhely
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală, Cluj-Napoca
ArhMold	Arheologia Moldovei, București
Banatica	Banatica. Muzeul Banatului Montan, Reșița
BrukenthalAM	Brukenthal. Acta Musei, Sibiu
Carnuntum Jb	Carnuntum-Jahrbuch. Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte des Donaupraumes, Wien
Carpica	Carpica, Bacău
Castrum	Castrum. A Castrum Bene Egyesület Hírlevele, Budapest
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, București
CCDJ	Cultură și Civilizație la Dunărea de Jos, Călărași
CercArh	Cercetări arheologice, București
Colloquia	Colloquia: Journal of Central European History, Cluj-Napoca
CommArchHung	Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungaricae, Budapest
Corviniana	Corviniana, Hunedoara
Crisia	Crisia, Oradea
CsSzMÉ	A Csíki Székely Múzeum Évkönyve, Csíkszereda
Cumidava	Cumidava, Brașov
Dacia	Dacia. Revue d'Archéologie et d'Histoire Ancienne, Bucarest
Danubius	Danubius, Galați
DissArch	Dissertationes Archaeologicae ex Instituto Archaeologico Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös Nominatae, Budapest
Dolg	Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából, Kolozsvár
Drobeta	Drobeta, Drobeta-Turnu Severin
EL	Erdővidéki Lapok, Barót
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca
Emúz	Erdélyi Múzeum, Kolozsvár
FVL	Forschungen zur Volks- und Landeskunde, Sibiu/Hermannstadt
HOMÉ	A Hermann Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve, Miskolc
Istros	Istros. Muzeul Brăilei, Brăila

ABBREVIATIONS

JAMÉ	A Nyíregyházi Jósza András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyíregyháza
JbRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz
JromMilSt	Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies
KHKM	Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej, Warszawa
Marisia	Marisia (V-). Studii și Materiale, Târgu Mureș
Marmatia	Marmatia, Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Arheologie Maramureș, Baia Mare
MatCercArh	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice, București
MedArch	Medieval Archaeology, London
MemAnt	Memoria Antiquitatis. Acta Musei Petrodavensis, Piatra Neamț
MFMÉ	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve, Szeged
MIMK	A Molnár István Múzeum Közleményei, Székelykeresztúr
MNMAK	Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Adattárának Közleményei, Budapest
OH	Opuscula Hungarica, Budapest
PRS	Proceedings of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical & Engineering Sciences, London
PZ	Praehistorische Zeitschrift, Berlin
REA	Revue des études anciennes, Bordeaux
RMM-MIA	Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Monumente istorice și de artă, București
RevBist	Revista Bistriței, Bistrița
Sargetia	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva
SCIV(A)	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie 1974–), București
SCN	Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică, București
SlovArch	Slovenská Archeológia, Bratislava
SMMIM	Studii și materiale de muzeografie și istorie militară, București
SSz	Soproni Szemle, Sopron
StCercIstorCluj	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie, Cluj
StComSM	Studii și Comunicări, Seria Arheologie, Satu Mare
StComSibiu	Studii și comunicări. Muzeul Brukenthal, Sibiu
StudUCH	Studia Universitatis Cibiniensis, Series Historica, Sibiu
StudUClujH	Studia Universitatis “Babeș-Bolyai” – Historia, Cluj-Napoca
Terra Sebus	Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis, Sebeș
Thraco-Dacica	Thraco-Dacica, București
UPA	Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie, Bonn
VAH	Varia Archaeologica Hungarica, Budapest
VjesAMuzZagreb	Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu, Zagreb
VMMK	A Veszprém Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei, Veszprém
VTT	Veszprémi Történelmi Társaság, Veszprém
WA	Wratislavia antiqua, Wrocław
WiadA	Wiadomości Archeologiczne. Bulletin archéologique polonais, Warszawa