

# ARCHITECTURAL FINDS AND FOUNDER CULT EVIDENCE IN THE HEROON AT ORGAME

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**Key-words:** cult building, founder's tomb, Greek period, Heroon, Orgame /Argamum, roof tiles.

**Abstract:** The article provides a preliminary description of Late-Classical-Hellenistic roof tiles found in the offerings trench of tumulus TA95 at Orgame (Argamum) and suggests the existence of a roofing structure in close connection with it. The identification of the tile types was complicated in light of their fragmentary state. According to the chronology of the layers excavated in the offerings trench, where they have been discovered, the construction of tiles can be established in the second quarter-middle of the 4th century B.C. The identification of the tile types was complicated in light of their fragmentary state. Moreover, the article discusses the development of some types of roofed buildings connected to the ritual practices developed at the founder's tomb.

This preliminary approach will illuminate the benefits of even simple roof tiles in reconstructing ancient production and building practices at Orgame. One of the significant conclusions reported in this study is that our city and others in its regions (see Açı̄k Suhat-Caraburun) not only went on to make characteristic roof-styles of their own, as a statement of local capacity of „savoir faire”, but also sometimes even adapt the „international” standards, as those Corinthian or Attic, at local versions of tiles.

**Rezumat:** Prezentul articol oferă o descriere preliminară a țiglelor de acoperiș de la sfârșitul epocii clasice și începutul epocii elenistice găsite în sănțul de ofrande al tumulului TA95 de la Orgame (Argamum) și sugerează existența unei construcții acoperite în apropierea acestuia. Identificarea tipurilor de țigle a fost complicată din cauza stării fragmentare a materialului. Conform cronologiei straturilor cercetate în sănțul de ofrande, unde ele au fost descoperite, construcția cu țigle de acoperiș poate fi stabilită între al doilea sfert și mijlocul secolului IV î.Chr. și a funcționat până în prima jumătate a sec. III î.Chr. În plus, autorul discută evoluția unor tipuri de construcții acoperite în relație cu practicile rituale efectuate la mormântul fondatorului cetății.

Acest demers preliminar va contribui la o mai bună evaluare a descoperirilor de țigle de acoperiș în reconstrucția unor producții pontice și la identificarea unor tipuri particulare de construcții practicate la Orgame. Una dintre concluziile importante semnalate în acest studiu este că situl nostru și altele din regiune (v. Açı̄k Suhat-Caraburun) nu numai ca au produs unele acoperișuri din țigle pentru construcții diferite, ca doavă a capacitatei locale de „savoir faire”, dar uneori ele au produs versiuni locale conform unor standarde „internationale”, precum cele de la Corint și Atena.

Tumulus TA95 at Orgame (Argamum), known also as tumulus Heroon TA95 (Fig. 1), served as the location of the founder's tomb and as a storage place for the remains of the offerings associated with the founder/hero cult.<sup>1</sup> Systematic archaeological excavation conducted there between 1996 and 2002 brought to light remains of the ancient specific activities. Various finds have contributed significantly to our knowledge of the rituals, cults and architectural developments of this monument within the necropolis of Greek Orgame (Argamum). Moreover, it can be shown that basic principles for the development of cult and architecture have roots that survived for many centuries, revealing a first flourishing period between the 7th and the 3rd centuries B.C. On the basis of studies of this funerary monument the western landscape of the city can nowadays be viewed in the context of contemporaneous developments of the eastern settlement, situated on the promontory of Capul Dolojman (Jurilovca village, Tulcea county). The tomb served as a meeting place for various activities, since the sacrifices and rituals dedicated to the memory of the founder took place outside it in a special place connected with the circular offerings trench.

## Archaeological context

Among pottery sherds and other types of finds uncovered from the trench of tumulus Heroon TA95, a quantity of roof tiles has been identified. This material is very fragmentary and comes from stratigraphic layers of the trench. Yet not a single complete example of roof tile has been recorded from the interior of tomb or on the pyre layer. The most numerous were concentrated on the east side of the tumulus and never dispersed on the stone ring.<sup>2</sup> The accumulation of this material indicates the presence of a construction designed to provide

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<sup>1</sup> Lungu 2000a; 2000b; 2000-2001; 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Roof tiles of the trench of the Heroon were signalled, without any study, in Lungu 2000a, p. 108; 2000b, p. 83, fig. 6, nos. 8-9. They receive here a preliminary treatment. Extensive study is reserved for a monograph on the Heroon (forthcoming).