

THE HELLENISTIC GATE OF HISTRIA. REMARKS ON ITS FOUNDATION SYSTEM*

Virgil Apostol**

Keywords: the Hellenistic enclosure of Histria, the gate of the Hellenistic enclosure of Histria, raft foundations, piles, horizontal wood beam grid.

Abstract: The Hellenistic enclosure of Histria (the west side) was discovered in 1950 and the results of research were published in 1966. From that moment on, it didn't make the object of any further research. The defective perception of the foundation system of the so-called "sewage complex" resulted in insufficient research and documentation of the monument, with implications on the interpretation of the functionality of the whole. The present contribution advances a new interpretation of the ensemble named up until now the "sewage complex". Its "troughs" are, within the present hypothesis, the imprints of a horizontal wood beam grid which played the role of a raft foundation. An important implication of this hypothesis is that the surface defined by the imprints of the wood grid raft foundation represents in fact the trace of a gate tower, unidentified until now. Thus, the gate of the Hellenistic enclosure was flanked by two rectangular towers, of which the south one identified during the 1951-1954 excavations and the north one reconstructed here by means of fresh interpretation of archaeological evidence.

Rezumat: Incinta elenistică a Histriei (latura vestică) a fost descoperită în anul 1950 și rezultatele cercetărilor au fost publicate în anul 1966. Din momentul publicării, aceasta nu a mai făcut obiectul vreunei cercetări arheologice. Percepția defectuoasă a sistemului de fundare al așa zidului „complex de canalizare” a avut ca rezultat o insuficientă cercetare și documentare a monumentului, cu implicații asupra interpretării funcțiunii ansamblului. Prezentarea de față propune o nouă interpretare a ansamblului denumit până acum „complexul de canalizare”. „Canalele” acestui ansamblu sunt, în ipoteza propusă de noi, amprentele unei rețele de bărne orizontale din lemn care îndeplinea funcția structurală a unui radier. O implicație importantă a acestei ipoteze este că suprafața definită de amprentele rețelei-radier de lemn reprezintă de fapt amprenta unui turn de poartă neidentificat până în prezent. Astfel, poarta incintei elenistice era flancată de două turnuri rectangulare, cel de la sud, identificat cu ocazia cercetărilor din anii 1951-1954, și cel de la nord, reconstituit acum prin reinterpretarea mărturiilor arheologice.

The western side of the Hellenistic enclosure of Histria was discovered during the research campaign of the summer of 1950. Its research made the object of a monographic presentation in the volume *Histria II*.¹ The erroneous perception of the construction system of the so-called "sewage complex" resulted in insufficient research and, implicitly, documentation of the monument. Naturally, these deficiencies left their imprint upon the functional interpretation of the respective ensemble.²

The present contribution will focus on the foundation system of the Hellenistic enclosure in the area which the authors of the 1950's research called the "sewage system".

Description of the "sewage system".³ In the authors' vision, the sewage system comprised a water pool, where four parallel troughs start westward; another group of four troughs develops northward from the junction point of the first group of troughs, and perpendicular to it. This second group, with no connection to the mentioned pool, meets at its north extremity a second supposed pool. This latter was a bend point to another bundle made of four troughs, extending westward and parallel to the first group (Fig. 1).

* The present contribution elaborates on the paper *Despre zidul elenistic de la Histria* given at the Symposium "Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology" in April 2010 (ARA/11).

** Virgil Apostol, The National Museum for the History of Romania, Bucharest.

¹ Preda, Doicescu 1966.

² *Ibidem*, cap. II, p. 324.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 324-329.