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Abstract of the doctoral thesis

**Social identity in the funerary practices on the territory of
Dacia during the II c. B.C.-I c. A. D.**

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I. INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS

1.1 Justification of the theme

The subject of this paper is the social identity in the funerary environment on the territory of *Dacia* in the period between the II c. BC.-I c. AD. The funerary practices associated with this period are a topic debated for many years in the scientific literature due to the particular form it exhibits. There is a pronounced differentiation between the expression of the funeral environment prior to this moment, but also in relation to the discoveries that follow the proposed chronological interval. The starting point of this research is related to the changes taking place in the second century BC. in the way of funeral expression. The period between V c. BC.-III c.AD.. presents urn and pit cremation graves as funerary standard, inhumation graves being used mainly for sub-adult individuals, a situation interpreted as reflecting a certain identity mark. Inhumation tombs associated with the adult population appear in a very small number, the most representative of them being those in the necropolis of Stelnica where a higher number of such funerary contexts is recorded. Starting with the II c. BC. we can mark the presence of a much smaller number of discoveries, of which cremation graves that present in a large number of cases pieces with martial function often burned together with the deceased stand out. Inhumation graves most often consist of deposits of whole or fragmentary skeletons in pits with household filling. Such depositions do not present a clear standardization regarding the number of individuals, their position or funeral inventories.

1.2 Geographical and chronological setting

The chronological and geographical setting of the research is analyzed, highlighting both the aspects related to the ethnonyms used and their criticism, as well as the geographical space dedicated for analysis. Also, the main historical events taking place in the proposed period are showcased and the geographical space structured.

1.3 Framing funerary practices

The funerary practices discussed from the period between II c. BC.-I c. AD. are framed among the funerary practices developed by the North-Thracian tribes during the V c. BC.-III c.AD. and those that develop after the time of the Roman conquest, both for the area integrated into the territory of the Roman Empire and for those areas outside of roman control.

1.4 Sources related to the funeral environment and state of the research

The sources referring to the funerary environment are analyzed and criticized. It is being noted that the interpretation of archaeological finds in this space tried to mold the data with the historical sources regarding the presence of human sacrifices. Also, the role of women is analyzed through the prism of historical sources, which has so far not allowed highlighting the agency of female individuals in the main publications on the funerary environment. The main existing data from archaeological and anthropological publications regarding the funerary environment studied is synthesized, highlighting the history of research on the subject.

1.5 Presentation of chapters

The introduction focuses on the methodology and a brief history research along with a chronological framing of funerary practices. The history of the research and the main literary sources referring to the funerary environment are being noted, the introduction being completed with the planning of chapters and the presentation of the main methods used in anthropological analysis.

Chapter II deals with identity in archaeology, showcasing the development of the study of identities in historiographical context. The general framework of funerary practices during this period is observed, integrating aspects related to the position of individuals within the group and social interactions. The chapter focuses on identity-charged elements: contextualization of the body, gender identity and age identity, the theoretical information being doubled by examples from the studied environment.

Chapter III focuses on funerary habitus looking at it in an attempt to identify a particular pattern of burials. The first part of the chapter focuses on the theoretical part and represents the interpretative support of the analysis. Then, funerary models of the Padea group, of the Celts of Transylvania from the previous chronological horizon, the situation in the province of Moesia, and of other groups of barbarians from geographically close spaces like the Poieneșt-Lucașeuca group or the scordisci are highlighted.

Chapter IV focuses on the interpretive integration of the research. The main funerary typologies made on the funerary practices of the era are criticized. Subsequently, the deposition models of the studied contexts are defined by incorporating a novel typology. Subsequently, a case study regarding Ocița-Buridava is made. The last part outlines general interpretative aspects and future research directions.

Chapter V is represented by the anthropological analysis of a lot of 57 inhumation depositions and 17 cremation depositions. The first part of the chapter describes the lots under study, which are later divided into inhumation and cremation graves. For the inhumation graves, the case that stands out the most are the pit depositions. The metric data obtained and possible occupational stress patterns are discussed, and finally an observation is made on animal deposition.

Chapter VI is intended for conclusions, focusing on the main results and the future of the research Chapter VII is the catalogue of funerary finds that compiles all known or presumed funerary finds from the era. The last part of the paper consists of bibliography and appendices that provide explanatory support.

1.6 Methods of analysis

The methodology used during the study is arranged on two levels. The first of these refers to the actual anthropological analysis applied to two lots of graves, some of them inhumations, coming mainly from three settlements: Grădiştea-Movila Crestata, Sighişoara-Wittemberg and Orlea-Grindu Iancu Muşat, complemented by other skeletons from inhumation contexts from Cetăţeni, Piscu Crăsani or Popeşti. Data was obtained regarding the conservation and representation status of the skeletons, sex and age determinations of individuals, their pathological conditions, measurements in order to observe the patterns of physical activities undertaken or traumatic traces recorded at skeletal level. The second, smaller batch was composed of cremation graves from settlements such as Piatra Craivii, Popeşti, Cetăţeni, Gothatea or Racoş. In this case, data was recorded on the conservation status and representation of the skeletons, their degree and temperature of burning, age determinations and sex determinations in a few cases where they could be made.

The second methodological layer is related to the integration of anthropological data with a conceptual and interpretative framework appropriate to the discoveries through the prism of a bioarchaeological approach. Theoretical currents relating to identity archaeology have been pursued in an attempt to define an identity model for anthropologically analyzed individuals. Several trajectories were traced: age, gender or social status to observe how the types of findings correlated with certain identity patterns specific to the era. One of the central factors of the interpretative discourse is the integration into a wider european context of the La Tène period the funerary behaviors in the North-Danube area in order to overcome the

current state of research that proposes only a regional look still anchored in cultural-historical interpretative models.

II. IDENTITYA-FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

2.1 The study of identity

The development of a discourse on the identity infused elements of the deceased required a critical positioning and observation of identity-charged elements. The chapter on the theoretical framing of the concepts used was divided into three parts, the first of which is an analysis of ideas related to identity in archaeology and their development starting from the cultural-historical discourse, dominant in archaeological interpretation until the second half of the twentieth century. The theoretical changes that led to the modern form of understanding identity in archaeology are pursued, several conceptual models of identity study and methods by which identity discourse can be emphasized within the funerary environment being integrated. The dichotomy present in the studied funerary practices showcases the presence of two main funerary typologies, probably associated with groups representing distinct social identities. A critique of concepts related to ethnic identity is also presented, seeking a model that is built around individual agency.

2.2 Identity-charged elements

2.2 1 Body hypostases

This part of the paper deals with the elements that compose identity and the directions from which it can be viewed in an applied way in archaeological discourse. Two interpretive models of the human body developed by Martin are highlighted, where the body is seen in a tripartite form. The first of these is that of the body as self, which refers to the physiological state of the human body and how it can be viewed through the prism of an accumulation of elements. However, looking only from this perspective can cause a series of constructs that do not allow enough nuance in the interpretative discourse on funerary discoveries.

The second model is that of a social body, understood as the position that the individual occupies within the group. The particularities of the funerary ritual, inventories, position and construction of the tomb are elements that can provide a framework for the analysis of the social body.

The third model is that of a political body, understood as the result of the social position of the individual. It can be traced based on elements related to pathology, trauma or the degree of robustness of bones that provide information about the activities and position of each of the deceased. Certain peculiarities in funerary inventories are traced at the level of the studied territory, for example, the presence or absence of martial pieces in incineration graves as well as the geographical distribution of these forms.

2.2.2 Sex and gender

A critique of how sex determination occurs in archaeology is presented, often in the absence of anthropological analysis, and in particular how this determination is made solely on the basis of funerary inventory, without taking into account possible cultural differences in defining these roles or associating certain objects with individual aspects. There are also several examples from geographically related environments that provide some observations regarding the distribution of inventory categories and how they integrate with the results of anthropological analyses. The interpretation of barbarian groups exclusively through the prism of Greco-Roman sources is also criticized and the position of warriors within La Tène society through is contextualized through the concept of male habitus, understood as the expression of dominance over other men on a social level and a rather symbolic level over women within society, as well as that of hegemonic masculinity, understood as a cultural dynamic through which a group takes initiative in social life and establishes patriarchal forms in which women take a socially subordinate position.

2.2.3 Age

Models of age conceptualization are presented, as is the case of the tripartite one made by Sofaer, which consists of chronological age, physiological age and cultural age. The first of these is related to the biological age of the individual, the one observed in anthropological analysis based on bone changes. This may or may not be consistent with biological age based on the specific characteristics of the skeletons analyzed. The last point, cultural age refers to how an individual's age is understood and constructed at the level of the society to which he belongs. Several peculiarities of the sub-adult individuals that were analyzed are highlighted, taking into account both the discoveries from Hunedoara-Castle Garden, the only necropolis known at the level of the era, where almost exclusively buried sub-adults are deposited, but also the particular situation encountered in the pit depositions and possible explanations of these types of manifestations in the funerary environment.

III. FUNERARY HABITUS: FUNERARY PATTERNS IN THE ERA

3.1 Theoretical and interpretative support

The central point is reflected in the idea of *habitus*, a term taken from Pierre Bourdieu and understood as the way people perceive the functioning of the world through empirical, if socially conditioned, mechanisms. In the context of archaeology, *habitus* is both an agent and a social product. In its understanding, it generates modeled actions that are reproduced but also change by circumstances, forming perceptions and practices modeled at the level of each individual, in other words, it represents the integration of new structures through their relationship with previous ones. One of the main interests throughout the paper is to identify this *habitus* type specific to the populations of the La Tène period and in the north-thracian environment, starting from the research of Egger or Von Rummel. The main funerary categories of the era are presented and discussed trying to understand how the specificity of each of them can be framed on a funerary model integrated into the *habitus*. The main elements of the funerary inventory that present identity functions are highlighted and the origin and diffusion of these behaviors at the level of the studied micro-regions are presented, differences in identity expression on probable tribal bases being also suggested.

3.2 Padea Panaghiurskii-Kolonii Group

The cultural group Padea-Panaghiurskii-Kolonii is presented, being initially located on the Danube line characterized by cremation graves with martial inventory. The association of this group with the changes in the funerary environment on the territory of Transylvania was marked by the main funerary discoveries and by the specific identity of the pieces deposited in these tombs, In this regard the penetration of this group on the territory of Transylvania starting with the II c. BC. is being recorded. This kind of approach was necessary due to the presence of two different models of funerary practices, associated with a possible social and identity distinction, one of them centered on the Padea group. The diffusion of tombs specific to the Padea group and how they expand in the context of the relative chronology of the period is also traced.

3.3 Celtic funerary practices on the territory of Transylvania IVth century BC-II a. Chr.

The general models of funerary practices in the Celtic environment are drawn, focusing on the ideological model exposed by them but also on the heterarchic model present in the funerary practices specific to the Celts. The situation is contextualized with the discoveries on the territory of Transylvania during the IV c. BC-II c. BC. the moment preceding the chronological horizon approached within the scope of this paper. General models of funerary practices are mentioned, hence the aspects related to cohabitation between Celtic and North-Thracian groups, illustrating possible strategies of influencing funerary practices, but also a separation from the model present in the Celtic horizon of Transylvania.

3.4 Funerary practices in the province of Moesia

The study of funerary practices within the Roman Empire is contextualized through funerary practices found in the province of Moesia, a province of contact with the studied environment. The emphasis is placed on the systematization of funerary treatment within the Roman Empire and its legal construction. There is also a presentation of tomb typologies.

3.5 Funerary practices in the Sarmatic environment

Funerary practices in the Sarmatian environment are discussed focusing on the particularities for both the North-Pontic area and the territory of Moldavia and Wallachia. There is an emphasis on the funerary typologies in the two spaces.

3.6 Funerary practices of the Poieniști-Lucașeuca group

The funerary discoveries associated with the Poieniști-Lucașeuca group, a group attributed to the Bastarnae, are analyzed. Data is provided on the main necropolises and their main features are studied. Also, the data related to funerary practices is doubled by the presence of elements of material culture specific to this group in the North-Thracian environment, the data being contextualized based on the events presented within the sources.

3.7 Funerary practices among Balkan Celts – the case of the Scordisci

The last case studied refers to the Scordisci, where data on cremation burials with martial pieces are integrated, their presence in historical sources being contextualized and the main features of their funerary practices recorded.

IV. INTERPRETATIVE INTEGRATION

4.1. Critique of funerary typologies

The main funerary typologies that have been developed so far in the studied chronological interval are presented, discussed and criticized. The funerary typology made by Mircea Babes, the one developed by Valeriu Sirbu and the one developed by Alexandru Popa based on the statistical distribution of the types of graves north of the Danube were highlighted. The distribution of martial pieces showcases on one hand a stratification of funerary inventories within cremation graves, which highlights a vertically arranged social group with a specific identity through the presence of identity-specific pieces. The peculiarity of tumular graves on the territory of Moldova where weapons are not present in tumular graves is also highlighted as well as the distribution of both cremation and inhumation at the level of the same settlements, as is the case in Popești, which indicates the simultaneous use of the two funerary rites in the same space. This situation suggests the existence of two identity patterns at the population level and a specific expression for each of them.

4.2. Depositional models

Several models of deposition of the deceased are presented, in terms of tumular and flat cremation graves, which show mainly martial inventory, but also another category characterized mainly by pieces of adornment that have been associated in the scientific literature with female individuals. Another category of discoveries of cremated bones, such as those from Ocnita, which has not shown clear contexts with only human bones from the new discoveries and it has shown only animal bones from the old ones. As far as inhumation graves are concerned, the most representative group is that of pit depositions, a group from which most of the material analyzed in this work also originates. Also, the necropolis of Hunedoara-Castle Garden stands out from the specific character that sub-adult burials take here.

4.3 Osteological materials from Ocnita Buridava

In the context of publishing a recent article on osteological discoveries from Ocnita-Buridava, we considered it necessary to carry out a case study regarding the anthropological

analysis carried out within this research on the discoveries here, both from the excavations made by Dumitru Berciu and those made by Constantin Barbulescu. Data is provided regarding the anthropological determinations made on these depositions and the interpretative model chosen by Bărbulescu in connection with these discoveries, centered on their strictly funerary character is criticized.

4.4 General Aspects

Identity expression takes into account as a first layer the social position of individuals within the group, the form that these expressions take in the studied population being observed. Questions are also raised about the status of barbarian populations in relation to the Roman environment. The ethnic approach in the study of the Iron Age by applying modern concepts to past populations is criticized. A conceptual framework that sees in the La Tène period two major components: the cultural vocabulary present in a generalized form at the level of barbarian environments and the local valences of groups that take over series of elements from this cultural vocabulary are being observed. A model of taking over this ideological model applied to the funerary behaviour in the Celtic environment is built and a series of differentiations between the specific Celtic heterarchic model and the hierarchical one specific to the studied one observed. The emphasis is placed on the role played by the Padea-Panaghiurskii-Colonii group in the changes of the funerary practices starting with the II c. BC., initially on the territory of Transylvania, changes that later go beyond this space, but which preserve a number of regional characteristics attributed to probable tribal differences. Several interpretative variants are recorded for both inhumation and cremation graves, but also an age distribution of the types of contexts and identity messages transmitted by each category. Finally, the geographical distribution of all funerary contexts that have been listed and the funerary specificity of each micro-region are highlighted.

V. ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Lot characteristics

The characteristics of the lots available for anthropological analysis are highlighted, both for inhumation and cremation graves. Data regarding the general state of preservation and representation of the individuals, their distribution by age and sex categories, as well as the pathological traces found on the analyzed bones is also integrated

5.2 Inhumation graves

As far as the inhumed individuals are concerned, the very high proportion of sub-adult individuals is noticeable in the age-related categories. Both the examples from the Hunedoara-Grădina Castelului necropolis and those analyzed anthropologically on this occasion are taken into account. A series of associations was observed between the deposited individuals and the animal bones present in some contexts, such as the case of the M4d grave from Popești, where in utero human osteological fragments were deposited alongside a *sus scrofa domesticus* individual in the same phase development as the human individual. There are also showcases of the main pathological characteristics found in the individuals deposited in the inhumation graves.

5.3 Pit depositions

Pit depositions are the contexts of origin for most of the finds that have been analyzed. First, the presence of a significant percentage of sub-adult individuals is noted, over half of the individuals from the fields of pits, many of them being newborns being placed in this category.

The presence of sub-adults both in individual depositions and in mass graves is noted, unlike females that appear either in collective depositions or in association with infants or male individuals that appear only in collective depositions. Also, data related to the specific pathological information of the individuals is indicated and the distinction in treatment between the sub-adults present in the pits and those from Hunedoara is illustrated.

5.3.1 Grădiștea Movila Crestata

The results of the analysis on the material from Grădiștea-Movila Crestată where only individual depositions of sub-adult individuals are recorded are illustrated. From this site, from pit 31, comes the only analyzed individual that presents peri-mortem traumas, but the

presence of a set of ante-mortem traumas does not allow the contextualization of this deceased as a victim of human sacrifices.

5.3.2. Orlea Grindul Iancu Muşat

The discoveries from Orlea are characterized either by individual depositions of sub-adult individuals or by collective depositions where individuals from all demographic categories are present. A large number of bones from the context named *Orlea 1968 pit 3 skeletons 4-7* showed an extremely high degree of fragmentation and mixing. Not all individuals could be separated based on the preserved anatomical segments. The presence of animal teeth marks on the bones was noted, which led to the hypothesis of bone manipulation before the final deposition.

5.3.3 Sighişoara-Wietenberg

The depositions from Sighişoara show the same type of model as those from Orlea, being either individual depositions of sub-adults, sub-adults associated with a female individual or collective depositions with all demographic categories present. The results of the anthropological analysis did not highlight in this case animal interventions on the bones, a distinction being possible in the treatment before deposition.

5.4 Cremation graves

As far as the cremation graves are concerned, a very small amount of bones generally weighing tens of grams is most often found, showing most likely a symbolic selection of the osteological material from the funeral pyre. Fragments from the skull, especially from the parietal bone, and fragments from the diaphyses of the long bones, especially from the lower limbs, are most often preserved. In addition, it was noted, as a rule, a higher burning temperature for the osteological fragments associated with the skull and long bones than for the ribs and vertebrae, a fact that could illustrate the way the individual was positioned on the funeral pyre. The only case that is characterized by a different amount of material appears in the discoveries from Piatra Craivii, where the amount of bones can reach several hundred grams, suggesting a different model of selection from the funeral pyre. Sex determinations could not be made for most cases, while age determination demonstrated the adult age of all individuals.

5.5 Metric data

In the case of metric data, a series of statures were measured for both male individuals who presented an average height of 1,66.334 cm. as well as for females with an average height of 156.735 cm. Several indices were also calculated from the long bones such as the platymetric and pilastric index of the femur, the cnemic index of the tibia or the index of the diaphysis section of the humerus. These calculations were carried out to observe whether there are elements that indicate occupational stress for the deceased. The average values of the calculated indices, although they show certain deformations caused by effort, do not show values that necessarily indicate the association of these individuals with some social marginals.

5.6 Animal depositions

An important number of animal osteological fragments belonging to several species, both domestic and wild, were present in the analyzed graves. The most representative of these are the fragments of in utero *sus scrofa domesticus* found M4d grave from Popești and the claw of *ursus actors* identified in the T2 tumulus grave from Popești. The diffusion of bear depositions in the north-thracian area is followed but also the diffusion in other La Tène related cultural environments. In this sense, these types of discoveries are contextualized and their interpretive integration into the models of the period is attempted.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions integrate most of the results of the present analysis and formalize its theoretical framing. There is a discussion about the main categories of graves that appear in the chronological interval between the II c. BC-I c. AD. and how each of these fits into an identity model. The most important case from this point of view is that of cremation graves, observed by separating them based on Alexandru Popa's typology into several qualitative categories based on the number of pieces associated with martial activity.

Elements related to the expression of power in the epoch are observed and the existence of several forms of identity is assumed in terms of the characteristics of funerary discoveries. The distribution of each funerary type is mentioned and the results of the present anthropological analysis are framed in this type of explanatory model. The partial conclusions of the anthropological analysis are resumed and arguments are constructed about the position of individuals within society based on the chosen funerary rite, sex and age at death.

Last but not least, the discoveries in the north-Danube area dated to the II c. BC.-I c. AD. are understood as a particular form of general cultural forms developed within the La Tène period by the warrior elite. Thus, it is concluded that the studied funerary practices capture several particular forms of a cultural model of Celtic origin that has an extremely wide reach in Europe. The strong hierarchy that is exhibited, especially in cremation graves, occupied by male individuals, and the distinctions between cremated and buried individuals have been contextualized as forms of hegemonic masculinity and male habitus. However, the status of the buried individuals cannot be established precisely, the traumas, occupational stress or pathologies encountered are not sufficient to classify them as marginal, being quite possible to mark specific expressions associated with an identity level.

The results of absolute dating obtained on materials from five settlements: Grădiştea, Orlea, Sighișoara, Piscu Crăsani and Popeşti are also highlighted, being observed that they can be dated especially in the I c. BC. Another element observed after absolute dating is that skeletons from fields of pits are dated before the other contexts. It is noticed how the results

of relative dating are largely confirmed, the lack of tombs dated to the I c. AD. being eloquent except for some finds in the Siret Valley and in the necropolis of Hunedoara-Grădina Castelului. A number of conclusions are also drawn regarding the expression of identity for both sub-adult and adult individuals, with several identity categories being showcased for both categories.

VII. CATALOGUE OF FUNERARY DISCOVERIES

The catalogue of funerary finds contains all funerary archaeological finds in the period between the II c. BC.-I c. AD. or in close proximity to this chronological interval, broken down according to the locality and point of discovery for each. Data on the context of the discovery, type of grave, funeral arrangements, position of the skeleton, funeral inventory, and other particularities of each type of context are included. In addition, the relative dating of each of them is highlighted. Not all of these tombs have undergone anthropological analyses in this research, part of them, such as the necropolis of Hunedoara-Castle Garden, being analyzed anthropologically recently, while a large number of discoveries are no longer preserved or are difficult to access.

Keywords: funerary practices, deviant burials, Iron Age, La Tène, bioarchaeology, social identity, dacians, Habitus, social age, inhumation, incineration, barbarians, warrior elite, animal depositions, pit burials.

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IX. APPENDICES

The last part of the paper contains a series of appendices that include graphics, figures and tables relevant to the discovered and analyzed lots, the results of anthropological analysis and the expressed funerary models. They have the role of providing support for the analyzes carried out and for the conclusions obtained within the paper.

