

A CASE OF CYNOPHAGY AT RADOVANU – GORGANA A DOUA SETTLEMENT, CĂLĂRAȘI COUNTY (2nd–1st CENTURIES BC)

Adrian BĂLĂȘESCU^a, Alexandru MORINTZ^b

^a “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest; e-mail: a.balasescu@gmail.com

^b “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest; e-mail: alexmorintz@yahoo.com

Keywords: zooarchaeology, cynophagy, Late Iron Age, *Canis familiaris*, Radovanu

Abstract: Zooarchaeological study of the faunal remains unearthed at Radovanu during the 2016 field season from three pits (P.1, P.7 and P.8), revealed the presence of dog bones displaying traces of anthropogenic disarticulation, defleshing and burning. Of the 68 dog skeletal remains, 20 exhibit such anthropogenic traces. The minimum number of individuals (MNI) represented by the 68 remains is four, all of them adults, of which two individuals produced the 20 remains with anthropogenic modifications. The average withers height of these animals is 56.5 cm based on the Koudelka index (52.9–58.0 cm; N = 6) or 57.4 cm based on the Harcourt index (55.7–58.9 cm; N = 6). Estimates of the gracility index, on average 7.09 (6.68–7.85; N = 5), indicates that medium size dogs (between 50 and 60 cm) of average robustness (diaphyseal index = 6.6–8.9) were present at Radovanu. The case of the Radovanu cynophagy is unique, today, in the Romanian zooarchaeological context. However, observations made more than 20 years ago might suggest that this phenomenon existed in the Geto-Dacian world if we consider only the degree of fragmentation and the burning traces observed in the case of the dog remains. Now, the cut marks found on the Radovanu dog bones provide irrefutable evidence that the species was, indeed, consumed by the Geto-Dacian population.

Cuvinte-cheie: arheozoologie, cynofagie, a doua perioadă a fierului, *Canis familiaris*, Radovanu

Rezumat: Studiul arheozoologic al faunei de la Radovanu care provine din campania de cercetări arheologice din anul 2016 a evidențiat existența unor oase de câine cu urme antropice de dezarticulare, descârnare și ardere descoperite în trei gropi (Gr. 1, Gr. 7 și Gr. 8). Dintre cele 68 resturi de câine determinate specific, 20 prezintă astfel de urme antropice. Numărul minim de indivizi cărora le-au aparținut aceste resturi (68) este de cel puțin patru, toți adulți, iar dintre aceștia doi au fost consumați (20 de resturi prezintă stigmatism antropice). Talia acestor animale are o valoare de 56,5 cm după Koudelka (N = 6, limite 52,9–58 cm) sau de 57,4 cm după Harcourt (N = 6; limite 55,7–58,9 cm). De asemenea, estimarea indicelui de gracilitate care are o valoare medie de 7,09 (N = 5; limite 6,68–7,85) ne permite să concluzionăm că la Radovanu existau câini de talie medie (între 50 și 60 cm) și cu o robustețe medie (indice diafizar între 6,6–8,9). Cazul cynofagiei de la Radovanu este unic în acest moment în peisajul arheozoologic românesc. Totuși, observații formulate în urmă cu mai bine de 20 de ani ar fi putut sugera că acest fenomen exista în lumea geto-dacică numai dacă ne gândim la fragmentaritatea și urmele de ardere observate în cazul oaselor de câine. În prezent, urmele de tăiere ale câinilor de la Radovanu sunt de necontestat, fapt care ne arată că specia era consumată.

INTRODUCTION

The Getic settlement from *Gorgana a doua* (*Second Gorgana*) and *Gorgana întâi* (*First Gorgana*) are both located on the high terrace of the Argeș River (Figs. 1 and 2), about 15 km upstream from its flow into the Danube, on the perimeter of the Radovanu commune (Călărași County). Two fortresses forming one fortification system functioned here during the Getic period (2nd–1st centuries BC). The Argeș River, now flowing 2–2.5 km east of the settlement, was flowing next to the base of the terrace during the Getic period and probably even before it, as indicated by traces of a paleochannel still visible on aerial photos.

The terrace edge on which the *Gorgana a doua* settlement was raised has a triangular shape, with a surface area of about 4000 m² (Fig. 2). The northwest-southeast oriented side of this triangle is parallel with the

riverbed (Fig. 3). A 9 to 13 meters deep valley, 10–16 meters wide and narrowing to 3–5 meters at the base separates the northern side of the settlement from the terrace. Most likely, both natural factors and human activity (starting perhaps with the *Getae*) may have increased the valley's size, providing the settlement with a more effective defence. The southwest-northeast oriented side is flanked by a wide natural valley (Fig. 2). Over time, all three sides were affected by erosion, which is easy to recognize on the northeastern side of the edge, where a portion of the settlement was destroyed as a result of massive landslides.

The archaeological investigations on the *Gorgana a doua* were carried out in two stages. During the first stage, between 1971–1988, the research was conducted by S. Morintz and D. Șerbănescu¹. This led to the introduction of the Radovanu – *Gorgana a doua* site into the scientific

¹ Morintz, Șerbănescu 1985.