

Tropaeum Traiani was famous among the political, religious and economic centres of Roman Dobruja. Over the time, via the specialty research, the site provided a rich historical-archaeological and architectural data kit, as well as information concerning the small finds like clay, bronze, iron, noble metals, bone, stone objects etc.²

The archaeological research was resumed by the Museum of Constanța in the area of the southern Roman-Byzantine quarter in the fortress at Tropaeum Traiani (sector C) by the end of the last decade of the last century, later unfolding (with a few stops) until during 2012 (inclusively)³. Their goal was to gather new information about the overall view of the late Roman habitation complex and the street system existent in the area (mainly *via forensis* or *cardo*). Insofar, within the entire investigated area, in the buildings to the east and west of *cardo* (Pl. I/1), after a vegetal thin level was recorded stratigraphically an ample debris level⁴. This level is composed of stone pieces (fragments or complete), tile, shingle and brick fragments, large or small adobe pieces (either burnt or unburned). Of the two buildings clearly individualising until present, we shall focus our attention to that westward *via forensis*, in fact a *domus*⁵ (Pl. II/1-2). In the current state of research, we may specify this is an important building, oriented north-south (yet, the northern and southern sides remain unidentified), 9.50-9.60 m wide and 18.50 m long. The eastern side is well preserved (identified on an approximate length of 15 m and 1.30 m in width) and is made in *opus mixtum*. The current southern “limit” is also well preserved on approximately 9.50 m long and 1.20 m wide. The western side is poorly preserved, being though identified on 15 m length and 1.40 m width. We specify that (given also a possible inner staircase of which a few steps stood), the respective building had also a floor, likely made of stone as well. Inside, the building had an *atrium* (7 × 5 m) and *vestibulum*, paved with stone slabs, a water drainage channel, three rooms on the eastern side, five access ways, many column shafts and capitals, metal civil and military objects (bronze and silver), bone objects, potshards, a rich monetary lot specific to the 2nd-4th centuries AD etc. The dating of this large archaeological feature was made based on the building system, the discovered materials and the general circumstances noted by the previous archaeological excavations in this quarter area, as well as those noticed for the town. The building had two phases, the first when it was built (during the first part of the 4th century AD), the second when it was repaired and re-partitioned (in the first two-three decades of the 6th century, dating ensured by a *folles* issued for Anastasius post the reform). The end of the Roman-Byzantine inhabitancy period seems to be placed towards the end of the 6th century, likely during the Avar attack of AD 586. This final destruction level, which put an end to the urban life in the fortress, includ-

² Cătănciu, Barnea 1979b, 177-226.

³ The first research was carried out in 1999 – see Papuc, Dobrinescu 2000, 8.

⁴ Papuc, Talmațchi 2004, 16, sector CI; the same situation could also be noted in occasion of other research in the south quarter, see for instance in Scorpan 1972, 349 etc.

⁵ Papuc, Talmațchi 2006, 35 (where we originally believed that several sides of several buildings were joined there); Papuc, Talmațchi 2007, 28 (where we already mention it is a single building only of large sizes); Talmațchi, Bodolică 2010, 16-18; Talmațchi, Bodolică 2011, 7; Talmațchi, Șova 2012, 18; G. Talmațchi, C. Șova, *Cercetări arheologice în sectorul “CI” de la Tropaeum Traiani. Campania 2011*, paper in the XLVI National Session of Archaeological Reports, Târgu Mureș, 23-26 May 2012; Talmațchi, Șova 2013, 17-18.

ing the southern quarter, is evidenced at the building level as a thick layer composed of earth mixed with much yellow-reddish ash coming from the adobe fallen from the upper half of the walls, by the base of which lay charcoal, iron spikes, tile and shingle fragments, much stone fragments etc. Moreover, similarly to the rest of the town, in this building too, later to this moment, appear poor inhabitancy prints in the form of walls with only a single row of small stones, uneven on the outside, bound with earth, which do not exceed, in our opinion, the end of the 6th century and possibly, the first two-three decades of the 7th century AD⁶.

The research carried out in trenches Cs13 and Cs14 (Pl. I/2), which partially evidenced the interior of the mentioned building, also resulted in the discovery, among other, of a number of three enamelled bronzes. The fourth was retrieved from the deposition area of the earth resulted from the excavation of the same area, during the 2006–2008 campaigns.

The four enamelled items are ordered typologically in the catalogue, their dating being correlated to the present archaeological data, respectively with those provided by the general analogies known within the Empire for such specimens.

CATALOGUE

The order of the presentation of the items in the catalogue is as follows: item designation; plate; material; sizes; preservation status; archaeological context; item description; dating; analogies; storage place. The presented items are in the archaeological collection of the National History and Archaeology Museum of Constanța (MINAC)⁷.

1. Seal capsule (Pl. III/1; IV/1). Bronze, enamel; L = 2.7 cm; l = 2.1 cm; h = 0,3 cm; preserving only the fragmentary head, broken hinge. Tropaeum Traiani, south sector, CI, Cs14; trench 3, -0.80 m. Seal capsule lid, heart-shaped; the delimited central field exhibits a heart-shaped motif, with the depiction inside of two opposed semicircular loops ending each with a small globule; unfortunately, the enamel can no longer be identified, with vague traces of its previous presence; likely traces of green glass. Dating: from early 4th century AD, in the archaeological context at Tropaeum Traiani; 2nd–3rd centuries based on analogies. Analogies: Ciugudean 1997, 132, catalogue no. 3, Pl. I/3–4; Benea et alii 2006, 143–144, Pl. XXI/5–6. MINAC, inv. no. 48.963.

2. Round belt fitting, applique (Pl. III/2; IV/2). Bronze, enamel; d = 1.85 cm; fragmentary item: part of the disk is slightly bent, and the stud is entirely broken, the piece is perforated in the middle. Tropaeum Traiani, south sector, CI, Cs13, trench 5, -0.90 m. Piece of round flat shape, with dented edges; the applique field is divided into four circular panels, concentric, each decorated with monochrome glass pieces (yellow, green and red-yellow) of different sizes, rectangular or square, by fives or threes; in the central part, the piece still preserves, on the inside walls, poor traces of enamel. Dating analogies: 2nd–3rd centuries (based on the general

⁶ G. Talmațchi, C. Șova, *Events from the VI century p. Chr. illustrated by archaeological research from Tropaeum Traiani (sector C)*, paper in the session “Interethnic Relations in Transylvania, Archaeologia Antiquitatis et Medii Aevi”, Sibiu, October 20th–23rd 2011.

⁷ Within the catalogue, the following abbreviations were used for the items' sizes: L = length; l = width; d = diameter; h = height.

dating context of this category of items); early 4th century in the archaeological context at Tropaeum Traiani.

Analogies: Diaconescu, Oprean 1987, 28, Fig. 5/39-41; Protase, Gaiu, Marinescu 1994, Pl. LXXVIII/3-4; Benea et alii 2006, 92-93, Pl. XI/15-19. MINAC, inv. no. 48.964.

3. Round belt fitting, applique (Pls. III/3; IV/3). Bronze, enamel; d = 1.6 cm; attachment system is partially broken. Tropaeum Traiani, Adamclisi south sector, CI, *passim*, in the removed earth coming from the excavation of trenches Cs13 and Cs14. Piece of flat round shape, the applique field is divided into four circular panels, concentric; the one from the edge exhibits motifs in letter S shape, the decoration technique being Millefiori⁸; all registers show poor traces of enamel, likely green; the edges are perfectly flat, compared to the circumstance known for the analogies. Dating analogies: 2nd-3rd centuries; early 4th century in the archaeological context at Tropaeum Traiani.

Analogies: Benea, Regep-Vlascici, Crînguș 2004, 59, Pl. II/4; Benea et alii 2006, 95, Pl. XII/3; Gaiu 2007, 183, no. 63-98, pl. X-XIII for the Millefiori decoration of the circular knobs. MINAC, inv. no. 48.965.

4. Belt set fitting (category of those with round protuberances), appliqué (Pls. III/4; IV/4). Bronze, enamel traces; d = 2.3 cm; fragmentary piece; one of the circular protuberances is entirely broken, together with part of the central body; the pin is fragmentary. Tropaeum Traiani, south sector, CI, Cs13; trench 5, -0.80 m. The item has a circular field with three concentric panels inside; the edge decoration seems to have been made in green (being identified six trapezoid segments places radially); the second register is divided into four trapezoid segments (difficult to define colour, likely yellow with red according to the analogies), and the central register no longer preserves decoration; four circular protuberances (only three preserving) decorated with enamel (uncertain from colour point of view currently, likely green or blue, and in centre likely red, according to the situations noted with the analogies) lay axially, "on the exterior" of the registers and the piece body. Dating analogies: 3rd century AD; early 4th century in the archaeological context at Tropaeum Traiani.

Analogies: Gudea, Tamba 1992, 316, Pl. VIII/4-5; Benea et alii 2006, 96, Pl. XII/5-6. MINAC, inv. no. 48.966.

All four items belong typologically to the second chronological phase of the enamelled bronzes in Roman Dacia, specific to the last decades of the 2nd century and the entire 3rd century AD.

The first specimen in the catalogue is a seal capsule, which pertains to the common use items⁹, serving to protect the seal from wax (necessary to authenticate various documents), respectively it could have had a votive function¹⁰. Such items were standardized (in shape, representations, decoration), which suggests mass production. This specimen belongs, according to Bajusz István's typology, to type VII with heart-shaped body (type VIIIf, with elongated body, being similar to items coming from the west of the Roman Empire and Syria, at Dura Europos)¹¹. As close analogies we mention the finds made in Dacia at Apulum¹². The dating of this type belongs to the 2nd-3rd

⁸ Geometric and vegetal motifs may appear, according to Benea et alii 2006, 16.

⁹ Benea et alii 2006, 24, 142.

¹⁰ Smith 1999, 40-52.

¹¹ Benea, Regep-Vlascici, Crînguș 2004, 60-61.

¹² Ciugudean 1997, 132, catalogue no. 3-4, Pl. I/3-4.

centuries AD¹³. In the Dacian provincial space, among seal capsules predominate the heart-shaped, alike our specimen¹⁴.

The second specimen in the catalogue (an appliqué) belongs to the category of belt round fittings, the attachment system supposing the existence of a thick stud by the end¹⁵. They were appliques whose functionality was related only to the decoration of the item to which they were fastened. As analogies we mention the finds made in the forts of Dacia Porolissensis, at Gilău and Ilişua¹⁶. In dating terms, it seems to belong to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, although there are a few exceptions as well¹⁷.

The third specimen, a belt set appliqué, was used either in horse harnesses or the Roman military equipment, just as decorative item¹⁸. As analogy we mention the find made at Porolissum, the Roman customs point¹⁹. The dating of this category of items belongs to the 3rd century AD²⁰. Finally, the last specimen is an appliqué (possibly military) which belongs to the category of belt fittings with round protuberances. As analogy we mention the finds in Dacia at Porolissum, both without clear find context²¹. These analogies date to the 3rd century AD²².

The research of sector CI has amongst its objectives also the identification of inhabitancy prior to the 4th century AD, which was partially fulfilled. Not far from the examined area, via the trenches made approximately 30 years ago, there were found archaeological evidences datable to the early 3rd century AD, prints identified as well in the area of basilica A (potshards specific to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD as well as a coin issued for Caracalla, likely from levels NIII and NII)²³. The entire fortress was built on a soil levelling, full of fillings and debris. The centre at Tropaeum Traiani suffered considerable damages during the 3rd century AD owing to the attacks of the Carp-Gothic populations²⁴. This quasi-total destruction of the fortress later imposed a total reconstruction once with the end of the 3rd century (started, yet not completed under emperors Aurelian and Diocletian) and furthered under emperors Constantine the Great and Licinius (according to the inscription of AD 316 found by the eastern gate)²⁵. This level (NIVA²⁶) corresponds chronologically to the last years of the 3rd century AD and the first two decades of the 4th century AD²⁷. After AD 316, it seems that the reconstruction civil works of the fortress would be finalized after a few decades²⁸, likely by mid century.

¹³ Bajusz 1995, 64.

¹⁴ Benea et alii 2006, 165.

¹⁵ Fèugere, Pillard 1999, 25–26.

¹⁶ Diaconescu, Oprean 1987, 28, Fig. 5/39; 29, 40–41; Protase, Gaiu, Marinescu 1994, Pl. LXXVIII/3–4.

¹⁷ Benea et alii 2006, 76.

¹⁸ Benea et alii 2006, 93–94.

¹⁹ Benea, Regep-Vlascici, Crînguş 2004, 59, Pl. II/4.

²⁰ Gudea, Tamba 1992, 316, Pl. VIII/1–2.

²¹ Gudea, Tamba 1992, 316, Pl. VIII/4–5.

²² Benea et alii 2006, 95.

²³ Panaitescu 1983, 234, 237.

²⁴ Barnea 1979, 228.

²⁵ Barnea 1979, 228.

²⁶ On the general stratigraphic situation and the levels identified at Tropaeum Traiani see Cătănicu, Barnea 1979a, 35–45.

²⁷ Panaitescu 1983, 234.

²⁸ Cătănicu 1995–1996, 201–214.

The half of the 3rd century was deemed a chronologic phase expressing the period of maximum diffusion of these enamelled products, as well as their making and diversification²⁹. Although produced in the 2nd–3rd centuries AD or the 3rd century AD, they appear in our research area in a general archaeological context that belongs to the 4th–6th centuries AD. Likely they were still used or preserved in the 4th century AD (during its first decades). Their wear, preservation and transfer during two or three successive generations (the 3rd century – first part of the 4th century) seem likely³⁰. The chronological data provided by this archaeological research of the south sector at Tropaeum Traiani point precisely to a continuation of their use including in the first part of the 4th century AD. Or maybe they (less likely), reached the area later than the circumstances noted chronologically in Dacia. Nevertheless, this seems an anomaly to the general dating of these specimens (at least from the chronological view of the archaeological context). However, one should not forget that many of the specimens known in the bibliography are ordered chronologically based on certain general dating, being found by chance, with only a few identified in clear archaeological contexts (within the rest of the Empire).

The enamelled items likely belong to the military environment, in our case possibly to the cavalry auxiliary troops, like those quartered in various forts (like for instance in Dacia). Excluding the seal capsule head, they were generally applied to the horse harness, having decorative and functional role, or were military equipment pieces applied on the belt. Enamelled accessories mainly appear in Dacia Porolissensis, yet they are also recorded in Dacia Superior and Dacia Inferior³¹. From the point of view of the military environment, there are records on the presence of units at Tropaeum or in the vicinity during the 2nd–3rd centuries AD. We mention to this effect, the presence around AD 170 of a vexillation of I Italica legion and one of V Macedonica Dacica legion³². In addition, we know that there or possibly nearby was stationed a detachment of XI Claudia³³, since respective legion controlled the southern area of Dobruja³⁴. Last but not least, it is possible that in the area, during the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, might have also been present randomly, units of *cohors I Cilicum miliaria equitata sagittariorum*, whose seat seems to have been for a period at Sacidava³⁵, respectively at Cetatea (Dobromir village, Constanţa county) in a *castellum Cilicum*³⁶, south Tropaeum Traiani. Respective military unit seems to have been involved in several actions in the period between AD 134 and (at least³⁷) the end of the 3rd century AD, being considered “one of the most mobile units”³⁸. To this we add various 2nd–3rd

²⁹ Benea et alii 2006, 14, 160.

³⁰ See to this effect the view according to which “...the possibility to transfer from one generation to another this dress accessory is likely, however should be regarded with due caution” in Benea et alii 2006, 26; or the wear of the enamelled brooches with several soldier generations in Benea et alii 2006, 166.

³¹ Benea et alii 2006, 132.

³² Aricescu 1977a, 46, 95; Matei-Popescu 2010, 82, 106.

³³ Aricescu 1977a, 38; Matei-Popescu 2010, 134.

³⁴ Aricescu 1977b, 182.

³⁵ Matei-Popescu 2010, 202.

³⁶ Aricescu 1970, 305–306; Aricescu 1972, 333–334; Aricescu 1974, 120; Aricescu 1977, 58.

³⁷ Matei-Popescu 2010, 202.

³⁸ Matei-Popescu 2010, 205.

centuries AD inscriptions, which illustrate the existence in the town of several centuries, tribunes, signifers and veterans³⁹.

The same enamelled items might have also belonged also to the civil environment. We reference here the situation noted in Britannia, where 30% of the total known belong, by the nature of the finds and use, to the civil environment⁴⁰. Maybe their origin, in this variant, to the civil environment at Tropaeum Traiani (also on the background of the changes suffered by the Roman military equipment by early 4th century AD) would simplify their presence in an archaeological context specific to early 4th century AD.

The relatively small number of such finds comparative to other Roman provinces may be related, on one side, to the rarity of their discovery both in archaeological contexts as well as by chance in the Dobrujan area, or, on the other hand, on their storage with museal and private collections. Given all the above, as yet, we do not believe they were made locally. In this state of research, we may rather consider them imports. In general, the specialty bibliography, over time, it is argued that the various categories and product variants of enamelled bronzes were made either in Barbaricum⁴¹ or in *officinae* of certain provinces in the East or West (and arrived by sea or land)⁴², or produced precisely in *officinae* in Dacia (and brought via land and rivers). And we take into consideration the existence of local workshops in Dacia like possibly those at Apulum⁴³, Tibiscum, Porolissum and Buciumi (the *fabrica* in barrack no. 5)⁴⁴. The items in our catalogue might belong to this last category, although, as noted, such specimens are broadly distributed all over the Empire⁴⁵.

The discovery of these enamelled pieces in a powerful urban centre in the central-southern area of the Dobrujan provincial space suggests that direct and indirect relations with other provinces, especially with Dacia likely existed. Henceforth, small-sized military origin bronze enamelled artifacts are also present in the south-Danubian Dobrujan province. The present finds may represent a first modest phase in the record of such objects in the Dobrujan Roman provincial space. All the more that they seem, as already mentioned, rare in the province of Moesia⁴⁶.

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³⁹ Ciurea, Gostar 1969, 111-112, no. 1; Ștefan 1974, 252; Bărbulescu 2001, 192; Petolescu, 2004, 239-240; Matei-Popescu 2010, 104, 134, 145, 147-148, 155, 162.

⁴⁰ We hereby thank the reputed specialist and friend Dr. Liviu Petculescu for his suggestions.

⁴¹ Böhme 1972, *passim*.

⁴² Benea et alii 2006, 126-127, 160.

⁴³ Moga et alii 1997, 535.

⁴⁴ Benea 1982, 337-343; Benea 2004, 76-77, 206-208; Benea et alii 2006, 101, 104, 114, 132, 153-154, 156-161, 166, 168.

⁴⁵ Henry 1933, 65-146; Bateson 1981, 53, fig. 7B.

⁴⁶ We reference the items currently published. Other specimens of the type might also exist, coming from excavations or chance finds from Dobruja, still expecting publication; we do not also exclude the possibility that same category items found still in Dobruja had already been published, yet of which we are not aware.

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Pl. I. 1. Location of sector CI at Tropaeum Traiani; 2. Trenches Cs13 and Cs14 in sector CI.



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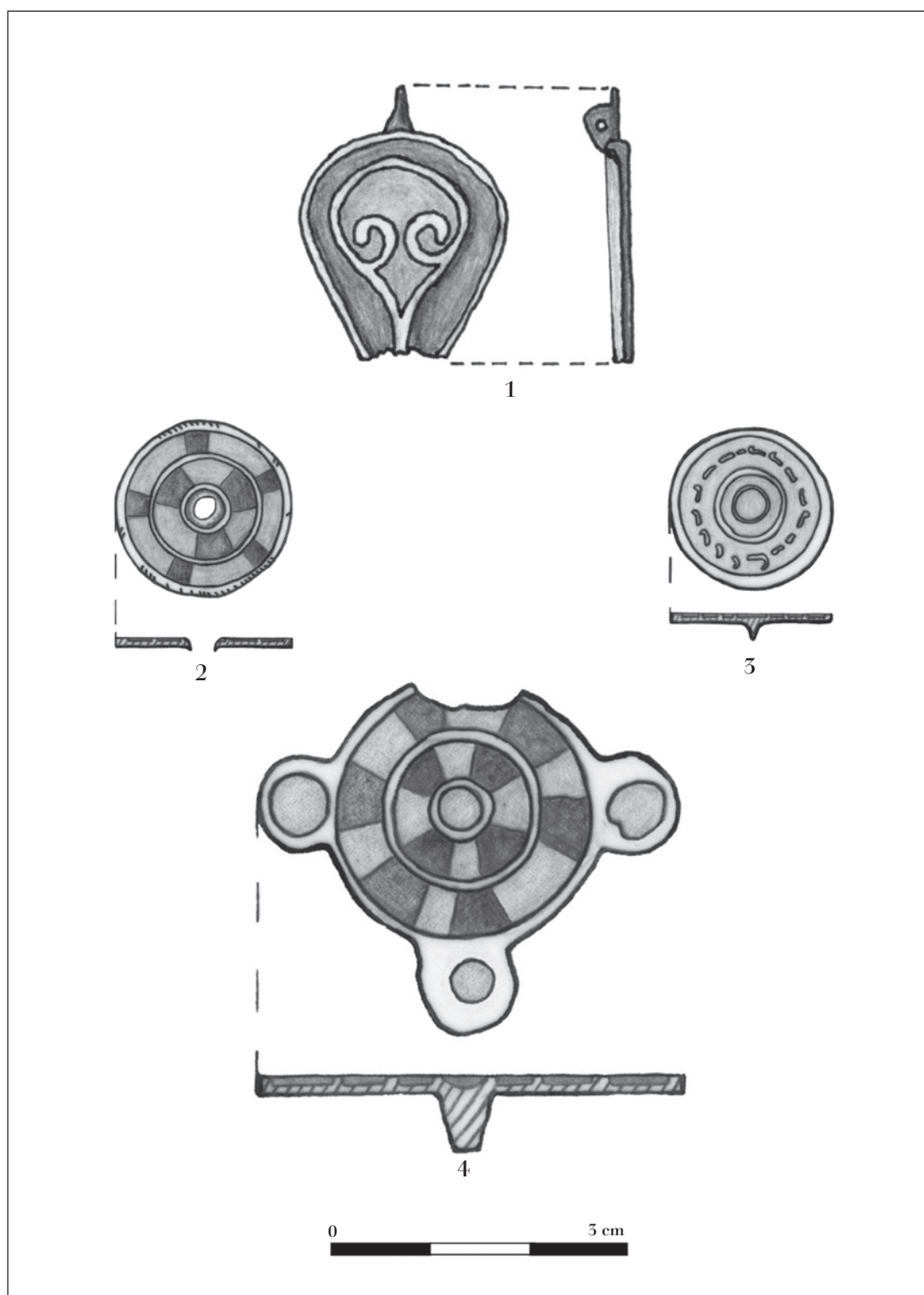


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Pl. II. 1-2. West and north-west overall view of the *domus*-building in sector CI.



Pl. III.1-4. Enamelled bronzes discovered in sector CI at Tropaeum Traiani.



Pl. IV.1-4. Graphical representations of the enamelled bronzes discovered in sector CI at Tropaeum Traiani.