

SOME ROMAN FIGURINES OF BRONZE FROM SUCIDAVA-CELEI¹

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In the Roman period, Sucidava-Celei was a very important economical, administrative and military centre (fig. 1). It was identified due to a famous inscription (fig. 2) and in the antiquity it was the centre of a territorium. The archaeological excavations made by a team led by Prof. Dumitru Tudor determined the limits and the phases of the civilian settlement (fig. 3) and revealed a late military fortification (fig. 4).

The archaeological discoveries are impressive: inscriptions and sculptural pieces, pottery, iron objects, bone objects, bronze objects, coins and monetary treasures, lamps, glass objects, lead objects, etc.². The number of fragments of bronze statues³ and bronze figurines⁴ is smaller, and this article brings a modest contribution in this respect.

The few pieces, which will be presented below, were discovered during the archaeological excavations in Sucidava, inside the early Roman layers.

1. A bronze figurine (fig. 5-8); full cast and well preserved; after cleaning the surface, the piece became golden-yellow. In fact, it is a representation of a feminine character, who wears a draped, long to the ground garment (chiton and himation); the dressed hair is gathered in a loop at the back of the head; in the left hand she holds a *patera* with fruits. Most probably, it is a representation of the goddess Ceres⁵. Even if other suggestions are possible, however the posture, the hairdressing and the clothing support this identification⁶. From Sucidava-Celei there comes an inscription dedicated to the goddess Ceres⁷.

Height- 10cm. Excavations 1982. The Museum of Corabia, inv. 2788.

¹ Paper for the Conference of the Museum of Caransebes, 10th - 12th March 2011.

² For all these, see Tudor 1938, p. 387-422; Tudor 1941, p. 359-400; Tudor 1948, p. 145-208; Tudor 1953, p. 693-742; Tudor 1965; Tudor 1966; Tudor 1974; IDR, II, p. 197-214; Tudor *et alii* 1980, p. 357-363.

³ Bondoc 2000, p. 41-46.

⁴ Țeposu-Marinescu, Pop 2000, pass.

⁵ A photo of this piece is on the fourth cover of the book published by O. Toropu, C. Tătulea, *Sucidava-Celei*, București 1987.

⁶ See for example, Kaufmann-Heinimann 1977, taf. 84-86/77.

⁷ IDR, II, 196.

2. A figurine of bronze (fig. 9-10); it is fragmentary: the lower part of the legs has not been preserved; full cast; after cleaning, the surface of the piece became golden-yellow. It is an ordinary representation of the goddess Venus Anadyomene; she is nude, with her sex and breasts outlined; the inguinal area was defined by an incised triangle; she wears a diadem on her head; the hair is gathered in a loop at the back of the head; with the left hand she keeps a hair strand or she just adjusts her hair; the right hand is close to the body, with the palm towards the onlooker⁸.

The preserved height- 5.2cm. Excavations 1990. The Museum of Corabia, inv. 2955.

3. A figurine of bronze (fig. 11); well preserved; full cast; greenish patina on the surface. It renders either a military character or a just a man military equiped, placed on a double-truncated cone socle, schematically rendered; on his head, he wears a helmet with panache. His garment was suggested by curved incised lines. The details of his face are hardly visible. In the right hand, he holds an unidentified object, perhaps a weapon, while on the left arm and shoulder there is a protective device. Although we do not have analogies for the moment⁹, most probably it renders a gladiator.

Height- 5.1cm. Excavations 1984. The Museum of Corabia, inv. 2897.

4. A miniature representation of a sword (fig. 12); full cast; greenish patina on the surface. Technical characteristics: pointed, double-edged, handle guard and the inferior end outlined. The piece could be a votive offering concerning the gladiators' games¹⁰ or a souvenir bought by somebody who attended the shows of this kind¹¹.

Sizes: the whole length- 5.7cm; the length of the handle- 1.2cm. Excavations 1977. The Museum of Corabia, inv. 2459.

The few bronze figurines presented above, complete the aspect of bronze figurines from Sucidava-Celei. While the representation of the goddess Venus is a common one, the one of Ceres is rare, perhaps connected to the fertile plain around Sucidava. The last two pieces are reffering to possibly public gladiator shows.

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⁸ A lot of analogies in the Balcan-Danube area; for the pieces of this type, see Țeposu-Marinescu, Pop 2000, p. 101, nr. II, variant B; for the discoveries of Novae, see Dimitrova-Milčeva 1988, p. 400-403 and Dimitrova-Milčeva 2006, p. 37-39.

⁹ For gladiator illustratios from our area, see *Antique bronzes 2003*; Bondoc 2006, p. 29-42; p. 122, nr. 118-119; Vagalinski 1992, p. 181-188.

¹⁰ Kiernan 2009, p. 75-78 and fig. 3.21/i-ii.

¹¹ For this subject, see Künzl, Koeppl 2002.

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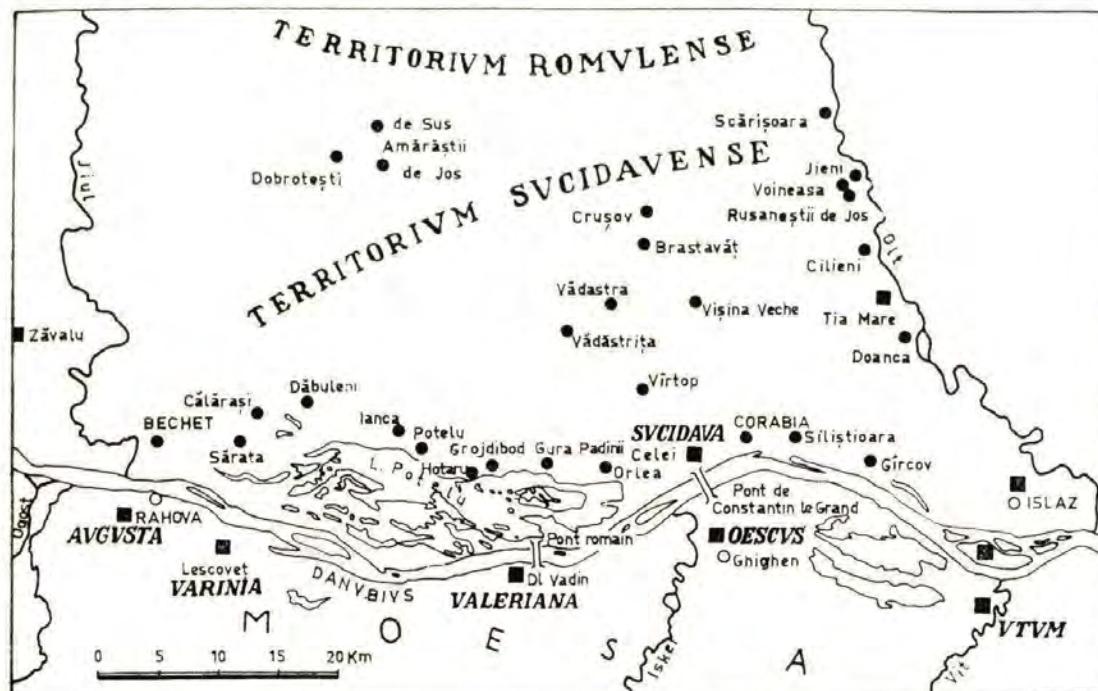


Fig. 1. *Territorium Sucidavense*, acc. to Dumitru Tudor, 1978.

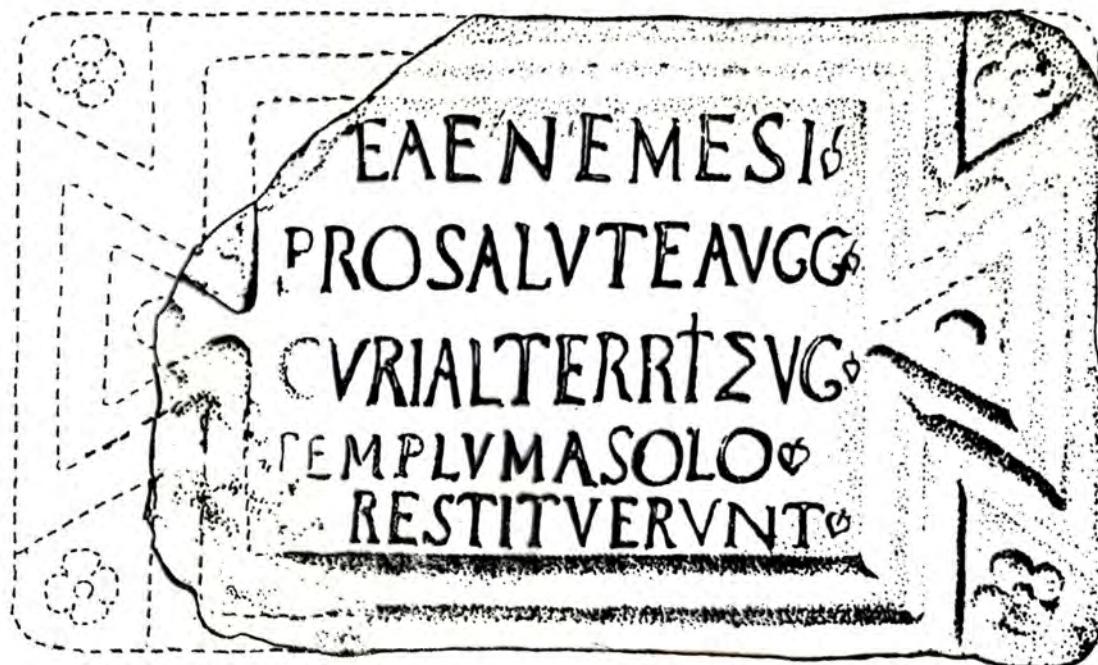


Fig. 2. The inscription which certifies the ancient name of Sucidava,
acc. to O. Toropu, C. Tătulea.

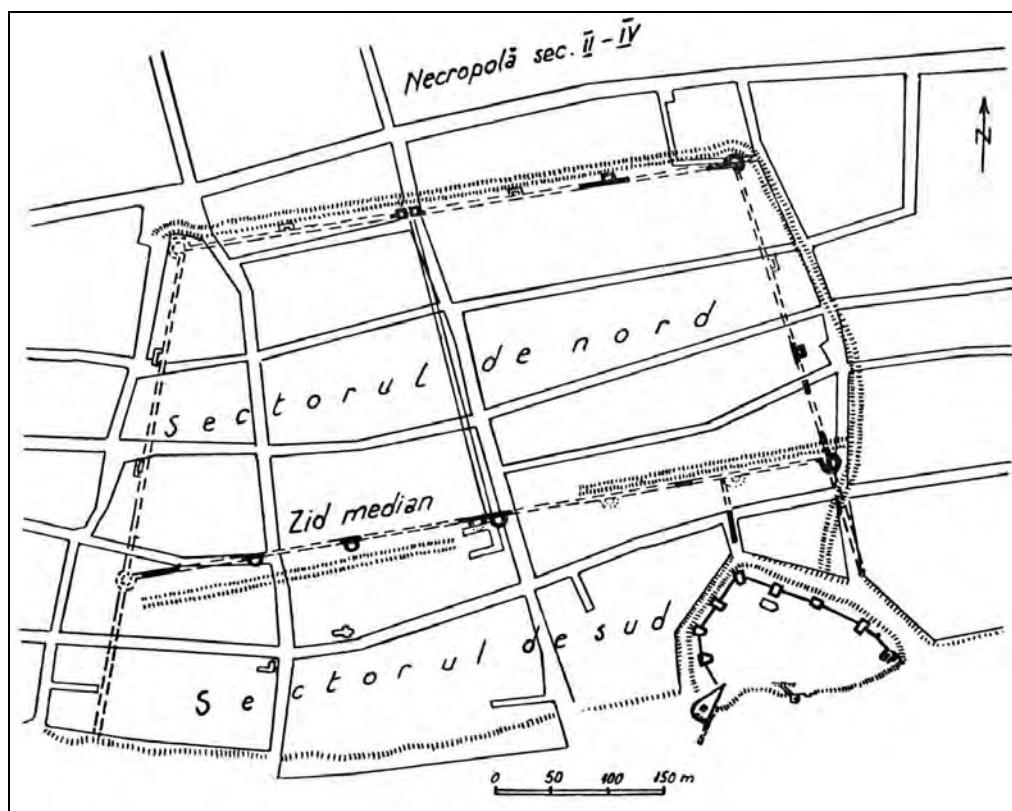


Fig. 3. The civilian settlement and the military fortification,
acc. to Dumitru Tudor, 1968.

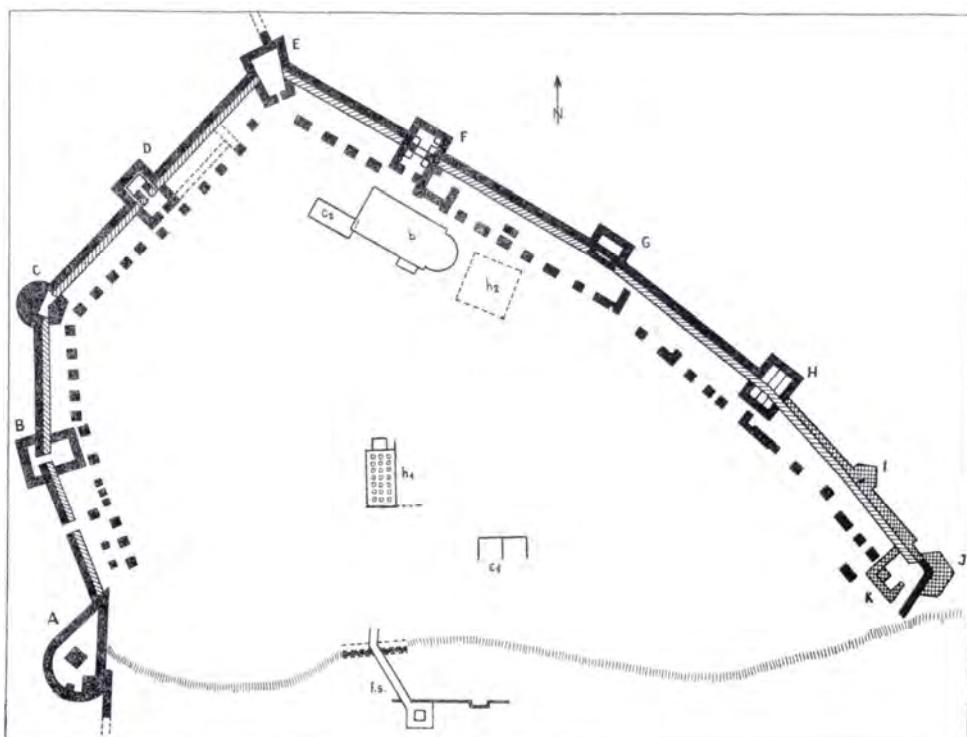


Fig. 4. The military fortification of Sucidava,
acc. to Octavian Toropu, Constantin Tătulea.



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Fig. 5-8. A figurine rendering the goddess Ceres.



Fig. 9-10. A figurine rendering the goddess Venus.



Fig. 11. A figurine rendering a gladiator.



Fig. 12. A miniature rendering a sword.

Câteva bronzuri figurate romane de la Sucidava-Celei

Rezumat

Articolul de față reprezintă o modestă contribuție la bronzurile romane de la Sucidava-Celei. Este vorba despre patru piese descoperite în anii trecuți, în nivele romane timpurii. Concret, avem o reprezentare a zeiței Ceres, o reprezentare a zeiței Venus, o reprezentare de gladiator și o reprezentare miniaturală de spadă.

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