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# ABOUT FOOD AND COOKING IN ROMANIA DURING THE ANTIQUITY

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**Abstract:** The article reveals the main aspects of the food and cooking in Romania during the Antiquity. The author offers a synthesis between epigraphic, archaeological and literary sources. The article presents the food tradition of the main populations: Gets, Dacians, Greeks and Romans. All the information are presented in a brief historical context.

**Key words:** *food, Ancient Romania, Dacian, Gets, Greek, Romans, literature, epigraphy, archaeology*

The Antiquity for Romania is a period which has two traditional milestones: 514 BC, the moment of Persian King Darius against Scythian tribes to the Danube when Herodotus presents the fight against the Gets and 602 AD, the fall of the Danubian limes after the uprising of Phokkas centurion who became later a Byzantine emperor.

Romania, during its Antiquity had a succession of political events and political settlements. The most important people were Gets and Dacians, as they were known by Herodotus in 514 BC and Caesar around 50 BC, in their capital works, *Histories* and *De bello Gallico*.

Based on the ancient sources, Dacians and Gets were the same people. The modern and contemporary researches consider that they were two peoples with Northern-Thracian ancestry which had the same language, the same customs, which made them to have perfect similarities which could lead to be considered a single people. It was considered that the Dacians lived in the upper regions to the mountains and Gets lived on the lower course of the Danube [1].

We will present a short historical description for having a representation of the people and facts which influenced generally, the Ancient history of Romania and especially, the food and cooking activity.

We will continue with Dacian, Scythian, Greek and Roman traditions on food and cooking activities based on archaeological, epigraphical and literary sources. We will try to present the main economical activities (production,

commerce) in which the food had a major role. We will insist over the information about agriculture with all its categories.

### **1. Historical background**

The Greek knew better the Gets and the Romans knew better the Dacians. In Dobrogea, during hellenistic age (III-I centuries BC) were known Get kings as Zalmodegikos, probably Rhemaxos (uncertain origin) Moskonos, Dapyx, Rholes Zyrales. In the Romanian Plain could be placed Dromichaites, contemporary with Thracian diadochus Lysimach [2].

In the I century BC, the most powerful king was Burebista, attested with this title by the decree of Acornion from Dionysopolis. Burebista is credited with a largest state, named by Strabo as „megale arche” (great authority/state). The state was settled from Middle Danube to Bug, and from northern Carpathians (now Tatra) to the Balkans. He conquered territories where lived Celtic tribes, Iranic tribe of Agatirsi etc.

Burebista is credited as protector of Greek cities from the Western Coast of the Black Sea after helping them to avoid the persecutions of C. Antonius Hybrida proconsul of Macedonia.

On the Western Coast of the Black Sea, during VIII-VI BC were settled Greek colonies settled by Ionians from Miletus, a Greek Colony from the western Coast of Asia Minor and by the Dorians of Megara and Herakleea Pontica. The main Western Pontic colonies were: Istros, Tomis (Ionian colonies), Callatis (Dorian colony), Dionysopolis, Odessos, Apollonia Pontica (Ionian colonies), Mesembria (Dorian colony).

These colonies knew a lot of dramatical political situations as the expedition of Darius, the presence in the Delian League, The Peloponesian War, the Macedonian protection, the Thracian assaults, the Hellenistic age conflicts between the successors of Alexander the Great, the Geys kings conditioned protection, the Mitridathes VI Eupator authority, the violent expedition of Marcus Terentius Varo Lucullus, the Caius Antonius Hybrida presion, the cooperation and the conflict with Burebista, the Roman conquest.

Burebista had conquered Dobrogea and Greek cities from the Western Coast of the Black Sea, using diplomacy and force. The help of Acornion was important in establishing connections with Pompeius Magnus in Macedonia, during the Civil War against Caesar. Is considered that after the defeat of Pompeius, Burebista occupied the Western Pontic Greek cities to avoid them to ally with Caesar. Strabo has noted that Caesar and Burebista died in the same year, 44 BC. The state of Burebista split in 4 and soon after, in 5 separate

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kingdoms. After his death, were present the names of some kings (during 44 BC-86 A.D.) as Deceneu, Comosicus (great priests of Zalmoxis the main god of the Dacians), Coson, Cotison Coryllus, Duras, Thiamarcos (attested on the ceramic inscription on Buridava ), Dorpaneus, the last one being surnamed Decebalus.

The Get kings from Dobrogea, Dapyx and Zyraxes were vanquished by Marcus Liciunius Crassus allied with Get king Rholes. The triumph was celebrated by Crassus in 27 BC „ex Thraecia et Geteis” [3]. Daciasn and Gets had the cult of Zalmoxes as main god, but there were anoher gods as Gebeleizis, Bendis (hunting goddess), Gradivus etc.

The Greek cities were included in Roman authority in 3-4 A.D., during the actions of Publius Vinicius. In 9 AD, is attested the presence of Ovidius in Tomis, the Latin poet being sent by the Emperor Augustus in some half-exile period. Dobrogea was included in the Roman province of Moesia (later Moesia Inferior) and Thracia (Mesembria). Greek cities were civitates foederatae as Callatis (foedus with Rome in I st century BC, reconfirmed in I century AD) and civitates liberae et immunes (other cities). They used to have autonomous rule, different by the Roman governors. A lot of Roman cities were founded in Dobrogea: Aegyssus, Noviodunum, Carsium, Tropaeum Traiani, Vicus Novus, Ulmetum, Troesmis, Capidava etc.

Moldavia without South-Eastern corner, a great part of Romanian Plain, a small North-Western part of Transylvania were not included in the Roman Province of Dacia. This province was formed by Banat, Oltenia, the greatest part of Transylvania, a small corner of Moldavia and the West side of the Romanian Plain.

Romans and Dacians confronted during 85 AD and 106 AD during emperors Domitianus and Trajan in 5 military campaigns: Dacian winter attack on Dobrogea (85/86 AD), campaign of Cornelius Fuscus (87 AD), campaign of Tettius Iulianus (88 AD), the first Dacian war of Traian (101-102 including Moesian diversion), the second Dacian War of Traian (105-106). In 103-105, Trajan, helped by architect Apollodorus of Damascus gad built a bridge from Pontes to Drobeta, across the Danube. The upper part of the bridge was destroyed after Trajan death to prevent attacks on Southern Danube. Dacia had the political center on Colonia Ulpia Sarmisegetusa. During Hadrian reign, Dacia was split in Upper Dacia and Lower Dacia. Later, Dacia Porolissensis was attested in inscriptions. Marcus Aurelius organized Dacia Apulensis, Dacia Malvensis and Dacia Porolissensis with common political and military leadership but financial separate leadership.

During the 165 years of Roman authority, the free Dacians attacked frequently Roman Dacia. Pieporus, the King of Costoboc tribe succeeded to enter in 170 AD in Macedonia. In Dacia were placed a lot of alae, cohortes, numeri (auxiliary troops of cavalry, pedestrian and irregular fight formations ) and three legions: IV Flavia Felix (moved soon after 106 by Traian), XIII Gemina (during all period of Roman rule, placed at Apulum) and V Macedonica (Potaissa, placed by Marcus Aurelius which resisted until the Aurelian retreat from 271-274 A.D.).

In Dacia and Dobrogea, were known towns as coloniae and municipia. Other settlements were cannabae (in the proximity of roman castra), pagi (pagus in rural territories of coloniae) and vici (vicus, rural settlements). In Dacia, were attested farms named villae rusticae.

In Roman Dacia were attested specialised work unions named collegia. The Roman Dacia resisted until 271 AD. Aurelian decided to create on the other side of Danube in Upper Moesia, two provinces Dacia Ripensis (center on Ratiaria) and Mediteranea (center of Serdica), to protect Roman popularion which would to retreat with the Roman army and administration from the abandoned Dacia.

Constantine the Great, during the IV century AD succeeded to include Oltenia and Romanian Plain from the Danube to the „Brazda lui Novac de Nord” vallum in the Roman authority. He ordered a new bridge across the Danube, which tied Oescus and Sucidava. He also ordered the restauration of the Roman military road from Sucidava to Romula. He convinced the Goths from Romanian Plain to become „foederates” -people allied by treaty with Rome. The political and military situation was generally unchanged until 602 AD. The Eastern Roman Empire confronted with migrations, free Dacian tribes until but generally resisted.

In the late III-rd century AD, Dobrogea formed the province of Minor Scythia, after the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine the Great.

During the Roman Age, the Greek-Roman Pantheon had offered the main gods. There were also Egyptian, Syrian, Iranian gods. In the I-IV centuries AD, the Christian religion will succeed step by step to dominate the other beliefs including the cult of tge emperor. They were violent periods of persecution.

## **2. Literary sources**

The literary sources belong especially to the well-known historians of the Antiquity. They, both Greek and Latin had the interests to present a contemporary reality, including the information about food, goods, and living

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costs. The Ancient Greeks and Romans were in contact with Gets and Dacians. The literary sources emphasized always the role of granary of the Pontus Euxinus (Black Sea region). The literary sources present also customs, traditions, facts and political phenomena which influenced the history.

A region which loses the contact with great civilizations as Greek and Latin civilization has no chance to be described and analyzed by ancient historians and also text creators.

The sources are datable from the VI-th century BC to the VI-VII century BC. The Dacian-Roman population in former Roman Dacia lived free in the centuries of migrations. In Dobrogea, the Roman and from VII-th century BC Byzantine Empire had kept the political and military control for many years even the Avars succeeded to end the civil living in the Greek and Roman cities. People retired from the ruined cities and started a rural way of life until the changes from the Middle Ages, without Byzantine control. In VIII-th-IX-th centuries AD, Dobrogea will be included in the Byzantine thema (military province or region) named Paradunavon or Paristrion.

Herodotus (*Histories*, IV, 95-98) describes the fact that the Dacian elite discussed with Zalmoxis, then after he had already become a god, with the high priests, all the political, military, economic issues, within some feasts with initiatic purpose:

"Then I learned from the Hellenes living in Hellespont and Pontus that this Zamolxis lived in Samos as a slave of Pythagoras, the son of Mnesachos. Acquiring, after that, freedom, he would have amassed a lot of wealth and thus, with the wealth he gained, he would have returned, among his own, rich. Because the Thracians lived in terrible poverty and lacked education, this Zamolxe, as he lived among the Greeks, especially around Pythagoras, the wisest man in Hellada, thus knowing the Ionian way of life and some morals more varied than those in Thrace, he asked for a reception hall to be built where he offered guests to the famous citizens; During the feasts, he teaches them that neither he, nor his guests, nor their descendants, will ever die, but will only move to a place where, living forever, they will have all the goodness. During all this time, while he was hosting his guests by speaking to them in this way, he had ordered an underground dwelling to be built for him. When the house was ready, he disappeared from the Thracians, descending into the depths of the underground chambers, where he remained hidden for three years. The Thracians regretted him and mourned him like a dead man. But in the fourth year, he reappeared

before the Thracians, making them believe everything he told them. Here is what the Hellenes say he did. Since he regards Zamolxe, as well as his underground dwelling, I do not deny all that has been said, nor do I believe them too much. I think, however, that he lived long before Pythagoras. But if Zamolxe was only a man or if he was only a god from the lands of Getia, I leave him"

Polybius (IV 38, 4-5) noted that the West Pontic world was engaged in trade in salted fish, slave cattle (brought from Pont) honey, wax (also from Pont), oil and wines from the Aegean. At the same time, there is a tendency to import wheat, due to the conflicts between the Greeks and the Thracians, the latter periodically robbing crops in the rural areas of the Greek cities of the Gulf of Halmyris and its transformation into the current lagoon system Razelm-Golovița-Zmeica-Sinoe, was forced to become an agricultural fortress, which brought her in direct contact with the inhabitants of Dobrogea (Getae, Thracians, etc.).

Diodorus Siculus in his work *Bibliotheca historica* presents the moment in which king Dromichaites had vanquished in 292 BC at Hellis, the army of king Lysimachus. He presented a feast organised by Dromichaites in which he shows that Thracians udes meat and vegetables at their meals. They also used to drink wine:

XXI, 11. The Thracians, who had taken the king's son, Agathocles, prisoner, sent him back with gifts to his father, thus preparing an escape against the unforeseen events of fate. At the same time, they hoped to regain the land occupied by Lysimachus through this charity. They had no hope of winning the war, since almost all the strongest kings agreed with each other and helped each other.

XXI, 12.1. Lisimah's army was tormented by famine. His friends advised the king to escape as best he could and to move the thought that his army might save him. But Lisimah replied that it was not right for him to leave his soldiers and friends, assuring him of a shameful escape.

2. Dromichaites, king of the Thracians, after receiving with great friendship King Lysimachus, calling him father, led him and his children to a city called Helis.

3. When Lisimah's army came to the Thracian power, they gathered together - running in large numbers - and cried out that the king-prisoner should be handed over to punish him. For, they said, the people, who had taken part in the dangers of [the war], must have the right to think about how to treat those caught. Dromichaites was against punishing the king and explained to the

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soldiers that it was good to spare this man. If he killed Lysimachus, he said, other kings would take his reign, and these kings might be far more feared than their predecessor. But sparing Lysimachus, he - as it should be - would be grateful to the Thracians, who gave him his life. And the fortified places, formerly in the possession of the Thracians, they will acquire back without any danger.

4. With the consent of the crowd, Dromichaites sought among the prisoners Lisimah's friends and at the same time the slaves who were accustomed to serve him, and brought them before the captive king. He then offered the sacrifice and invited Lysimachus to the feast - along with his friends and the most prominent Thracians. [Dromichaites] prepare [special] meals. For those around Lisimah, he spread a royal carpet, taken in battle, and for himself and his friends laid only straw.

5. Two feasts were also prepared: for those Macedonians, Dromichaites arranged all sorts of selected dishes, served on a silver table, and gave the Thracians to eat vegetables and meat, but prepared in moderation, placing them on tables of wood, which took the place of the table. Finally, he had the Macedonians pour wine into silver and gold cups, while he and his Thracians drank wine in horn and wooden glasses, as the Getae do. While the drink was in full swing, Dromichaites filled the largest horn [with wine], called Lisimah "father," and asked him which of the two feasts he thought was more worthy of a king: the Macedonians or the Thracians. Lisimah replied that of the Macedonians ...

6. After inviting Lisimah to the table and the stump was in full swing, the Dromichaites filled the largest horn [with wine] and said to Lisimah "father" and then asked him which of the two guests he seems more worthy of a king: that of the Macedonians or that of the Thracians. To which Lisimah replied that of the Macedonians. "Then," said Dromichaites, "why have you left so many habits at home, such a seductive life and a glorious reign, and the desire to come to some barbarians, who have a life of savages, live in you?" a land haunted by frost and lacking neat fruit? Why did you force yourself, against nature, to bring your soldiers to some lands where any foreign army cannot find escape under the open sky? » Speaking again, Lysimachus told the king that he did not know what war he was waging, but that in the future he would be the friend and ally of the Thracians; and — as to the gratitude due — he will never be inferior to his benefactors. The Dromichaites received Lisimah's words with a feeling of friendship. He got back from him all the fortifications occupied by Lysimachus' men. Then he put a tiara on her head and allowed

her to return home”.

The famous Greek orator Demosthenes of Athena confirms in one of his speeches (*Against Leptines*) that the Black Sea area was the main area where the grains consumed in Athena came from:

„[31] You know, no doubt, that we use imported wheat more than all humans. The quantity of wheat brought from Pont is greater than all that comes to us from the other commercial ports. And it shouldn't surprise us. This is not only because this land produces the greatest amount of wheat, but also because Leucon, the ruler there, forgave the tax on grain carriers in Athens and ordered the people floating towards you to and load the ships first. For - in exchange for the exemption of contributions you have given to him and his children - he has given you all this privilege.”

During the byzantine era, a Pannonian embassy conducted by Priscus from Panion revealed that the Dacians used millet in their meals instead of meat. Priscus Panites observed that in today Banat were a lot of villages settled and highly populated by Dacian-Roman population.

### **3. Archaeological sources**

The archaeological sources are very important because they present all the steps of the food and cooking evolution in the ancient territory of Romania. The archaeological information are presented on food traces, settlement traces, inventory of dishes, tools, ancient warehouses and depository places.

The archaeological discoveries cover the part before the Antiquity starting from Prehistory. The specialists consider that the Dacians were in the La Tene III C phasis of the Iron age in the moment of the Roman conquest even they appear in written sources in the VI-th century BC.

In the Bronze Age can be traced the existence of Thracian people. The Northern wing of the Thracian people was formed by the Gets and Dacians. On the Romanian territory is attested in this age a great agricultural activity. This activity includes plants cultivation, animal growth, fishing, hunting. There were also merchants, craftsmen for tools and weapons. During the Bronze age, the agricultural tools have superior techniques and ability in using them.

Starting from Neolithic Age, people used pottery, which was brought on perfection after passing from hand made pottery to the wheel made pottery starting from the Bronze Age. Also, the land could be dug with bronze and after with iron tools.

The housing had an evolution from natural shelters to the coordinate and

planned settlements starting from neolithic, including the fortified citadels from Bronze and Iron Age.

The Dacians used millet in their diet. They consumed millet in the form of porridge and polenta. They baked bread and used vegetables. Salt was a natural wealth of Dacia. The Romans, in addition to the salary, *stipendium*, offered the soldiers money to buy salt, money called *salarium*. Nowadays, the *salarium* has come to designate the monthly remuneration as a reward for work.

The Dacians drank a lot of milk, according to the works of Columella. They also drank a variety of beer, a home-fermented barley drink. Priests used hemp leaves to obtain trance states. It is believed that some fighters inhaled smoke from hemp seeds to go to battle with great courage, heroic fury.

Mircea Eliade and Silviu Sanie offer information about holly people in Dacia, the *theosebeis*, which appear in ancient sources. They could be approached by the communities from Qumran (Dead Sea, Middle East) in which can be considered as ascetic life. They were considered as „saint people”, they feed themselves only with milk and avoided any contact with women. Other people with priesthood abilities were *kapnobathai*, translated as „they who walk in to the smoke”. During their rituals, they used hemp seeds, laurel seeds which were thrown in fire: „Like all Thracians, the Getae knew ecstasy. Strabo reports following Poseidonius that the missionaries, by virtue of their religions, abstain from any meat food, contenting themselves with honey, milk, and cheese, and for the same reason are called "those who fear God" and "those who walk" through smoke”.

The Greek cities had a civic structure, *the asty* and the agricultural structure, *the chora*. Both formed *the polis*, the free, independent classical Greek city-state. An inferior status could have the market settlements, *emporion* and the religious points of connection, *temenoi* [4].

Greek colonization made new independent city states which had maintained good relations with the metropolis (mother-city). In Roman Dacia, at Șeica Mică, Sibiu County, a fragment of a funerary monument was discovered, called *aedicula*. In this fragment of the *aedicula*, a peasant can be seen plowing with the plow pulled by oxen, having with him a child. In Banat, at Tibiscum, Jupa, near Caransebeș, three archeological investigations were discovered wooden barrels with charred wheat, barley and hemp seeds inside [5].

In Dacia it was discovered that three species of wheat which were cultivated. Along with wheat, barley, rye, beans, peas, lentils, garlic, mustard, poppy, chickpeas and textile plants were grown (in, hemp). The seeds of fodder plants discovered in civilian settlements and near camps and

fortifications certify the existence of warehouses for feed supplies for domestic animals used both for work and for military purposes.

The most important villae rusticae in Dacia were discovered at Aiton, Aiud, Apahida, Apulum, Caransebeș, Chinteni, Cinciș, Ciumăfaia, Cristești, Dalboșeț, Deva, Dezmir, Gârbău, Gârla Mare, Gornea, Hobița, Jucu de Sus, Mănerău, Mediaș, Miercurea Sibiului, Răhău, Romula, Sarmizegetusa, Tibiscum.

Bicfalău, Cetățeni, Craiva, Grădiștea Muncelului, Strâmbu, Poiana are the locations where a lot of plows were discovered, which attests to the plowing.

In Roman Dacia, large ceramic vessels, named *mortaria*, were discovered, probably used for storing and fermenting milk and other dairy products, such as yogurt, cream cheese and cheese [6].

Also in the space we are interested in, warehouses for cereals called *horreum* and *granarium* (*granarium* were ventilated for air circulation, *horreum* had no ventilation) and milling facilities were discovered, which can be organized typologically and evolutionary.

#### 4. Epigraphical sources

The epigraphical sources are very important because they represent local elements which certify the local original information. The majority of Greek inscriptions from the Western Black Sea Greek cities present the situation of economical crisis, social, political troubles, the magistrates who had the mission to solve the crisis and also the sponsors who used their fortune in helping citizens to avoid the food crisis. The crisis was internal and also external, caused by invasions.

The Latin inscriptions are dedicated to magistrates, they present also the information about goods circulations, about import and export of foods, ceramic fine pottery, depository dishes (amphorae) etc.

A waxed tablet from Alburnus Maior contains a shopping list for a banquet. There, salad and onion are mentioned, among the items that had to be bought [7]. On the same inscription are presented two categories of wine: *merum*, expensive drink and *vinum a cheep* drink. The first was bought in small quantity, the second in large quantity.

A particularly important element for our analysis is the amphorae, more precisely their typology and content. These were containers that carried perishable goods such as salted fish, green olives, black olives, grapes, fruits, wine, olive oil. On them were inscribed both what they contained and the place where they came from, both the goods and the amphora itself. The amphorae

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document the situation of trade relations with the Greek and Roman worlds, whether we are talking about the Daco-Roman space, or whether we are talking about Dobrogea and the West Pontic Greek colonies [8].

At Potaissa was discovered also a *cella vinaria* a vine cellar in Roman Dacia. According to recent researches on amphorae, is considered that 45% from vine quantity consumed in Dacia was imported from Minor Asia. At Tibiscum, a votive inscription presents information about two wine merchants from a well known family in Roman Gallia, Turranii [9].

Largiana, Colonia Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa, Porolissum, Tibiscum, Romula are the Roman settlements where were made discoveries of amphorae which contained olive oil. The largest amount of olive oil came from the provinces of Pontus et Bithynia, with 54% of imports. As a percentage, the rest of the imports came from Italy 20% Africa Proconsularis 12%, Baetica 3%, Mauretania 2%. 2% came from the rest of the Romanian producers.

About 90% of the total amphorae in Roman Dacia were in almost equal proportions for wine and olive oil. the remaining 10% were amphorae for transporting other products. In the Western Pontic world, the import of olive oil from Rhodes, Thassos, predominated [10].

As regards fish, over 66% of imports came from Baetica and Lusitania (Seville from Spain and Portugal). 9% of the fish imported into Roman Dacia came from the Western Pontic world (Lower Moesia and Thrace).

Other products in amphorae as spices, grapes came from Italia, Asia (46%), Africa Proconsularis (7%) [11].

In Roman Dacia, the herds and the shepherds had a special attention. The magistras who controlled the activities concerning the herds were named *conductores pascui* [12].

At Istros, in the administrative sphere, they appear mentioned agoranomoi, magistrates with a role in market surveillance such as Aristagoras, son of Apatourios of ISM decree I 54. A magistrate is also mentioned in Istros, the euposiarch, who had to provide in moments of crisis, grain distribution. The institution which made the distribution was named „sitonia”.

The agoranomia was a collegial and annual magistracy. Neither archaeologically, nor epigraphically was determined the place where the headquarters could have operated these magistrates. The main attributions of the agoranomes to Istros were those related to control of commercial activity, supervision of meetings and festivities from the agora, the supervision of the good conduct of trade by verification the official system of measures and

weights of the fortress. Although the magistracy was annual, there were times when a character such as Aristogoras, son of Apatourios (ISM I 54, second half of 1st century BC), was twice agoranom. As the magistrates were not paid, we learn from the inscription that he donated the money needed for the organization processions and festivities from one's own fortune, also bearing the costs the restoration of the walls of the fortress destroyed by Burebista in 48 BC, also, for this being rewarded with public honors, being granted the title of teichopoios, "builder." [13]

Iorgu Stoian refers to the distribution of grain quoting a document fragmentary epigraph of the Istros:

"They willingly want to strengthen the power of the people ("democracy") they gave of their wealth money for the supply of bread, so that the people might live happily with wheat in abundance, which makes possible a distribution of bread, for all citizens, from the common fund, according to the law."

Accumulation of debts by non-payment of sums and interest on time related by the Greek cities was one of the most pressing problems much on their economy. We present, in this sense, the content of a decree, discovered at Istros, in the third century BC, in the middle of the Hellenistic era [14]:

"The Council and the People found a way: Under the presidency of Dionysius of Hieron, the archons proposed: whereas Hephaestion of Matris, Calatian, inheriting from his father a loan of 300 gold states, contracted by the fortress, from him, for years long, apart from the late interest, proving to be a chosen man and with heart, sympathetic to the hardships of the city, gave up the interest that was amounted to 400 states, and for the payment of the amount due by contract, 300 of statesmen, granted the city a two - year interest - free passage for these, to be praised Hephaestion of Matris..."

In Istros was celebrated the cult of Dionysos Karpophoros - „The Fruit Giver”. This quality of Dionysos refers to the protections of grains and vineyards.

In Odessos we have a mention of a "euposiarh", whose duties were to supply food for the organization of large banquets: *Euphanes of Zopyrion euposiarh and panygiriarrh*. Other inscriptions that attests the existence of this magistrate, are IGB I2 51, 111, 157, 167, 186, 204, 254.

Here is the beginning of a catalog, IGB I2 51: “Let it be in a good hour. In the during the priesthood of Cutare, priest and euposiarh, etc.”

Even if not all cities provide us with epigraphic information about sitonia

and euposiarches are presumed to exist in all Western Pontic cities in the late Hellenistic era.

During the same period, the granting of the title of euergetes tou demou - benefactor of the people - to the citizens who stood out in actions to help their peers, from debt cancellations to hostage repatriations, construction financing of public importance became widespread

If the benefactor was a foreigner, he received citizenship in the city where he had distinguished himself, as well as other privileges guaranteed by the quality of proxenos (honorary and first category citizen).

The ISM Decree I 57 of the imperial era attests to the benefits of a lady from the high society of Istros, Aba, daughter of Hekataios. She had the priesthood of the Mother of Gods, which could be the same with Cybele, the goddess of prosperity. Cybele, an Asiatic goddess had similarities with the Greek goddess of fertility and harvest protector, Demeter :

„Hekataios' Aba ... Herakon's wife ... descended from prominent parents and famous ancestors considering little the fame inherited from the ancestors ... She took upon himself, by his own exhortation, with magnanimity, distinction and piety, the priesthood of the Mother of Gods she was not content to perform the function as others had done before her, but she endeavored to imitate great deeds accomplished in the past only by prominent men.

She worshiped the gods, processions, sacrifices and prayers, celebrated the beginning of the year with rich feasts and meals. To all the members of the Council and of Gerousia, as well as to the members of the association of Poseidon worshipers, doctors and teachers and many guests with personal title, he handed them two denarii of man's head, an amount that neither a woman before her had ever shared it”.

Abba offered money and rich feasts and meals. Greeks used to eat fish, bread, olives, vegetables. They used also honey for deserts and wine melt with honey.

For some reason, during the Hellenistic Age, when none of the priests or personalities could be an eponymous magistrate, usually due to a financial crisis, the priest of the protective divinity of the city took over the eponym, but officially the name appears in the inscriptions god, followed, so as not to lose track of the years of the former priest which had been eponymous. He offered religious feasts and provided for the distribution of the meat of slaughtered animals to the population on the occasion of religious holidays when bulls or rams were sacrificed [15].

At Dionysopolis, Acornion agreed to be an eponymous priest. He offered the money for processions and arranged for the meat of slaughtered animals to be offered to the city's population on religious holidays

”[Acornion of Dionysius led a message] together with his companions with a son of Theodorus and Epi ..., at his personal expense, he went in the diplomatical charge traveling far and reaching Argedava, his father and meeting him, he always obtained from him ..., city ... and untied the people ... [tribute?].

Arriving (then) the priest of the Great God, he brilliantly performed the processions and sacrifices and also distributed parts of the meat (of the slaughtered animals) to the citizens. Being elected priest of Serapis, he also borne the expenses with dignity and good will. And because Dionysos (the eponymous god) of the city, no longer having a priest for many years and being (also) acclaimed by the citizens, he dedicated himself (to this service); and in the winter of C (aius) Antonius, taking (again) the crown of the god (that is, becoming a priest), performed processions and sacrifices beautifully and with greatness, and gave the citizens abundant meat. And accepting for life the crown of the gods of Samothrace, he performs processions and sacrifices for the initiates and for the city”.

We can observe that the notion of „meat” and public distribution of cooked meat appears twice in the inscription.

In addition to the confrontations with Thracians and other neighbours, including Gets, they are attested everywhere in the Western Pontic world moments of crisis (poor harvests - aphorism), the establishment of distribution centers (sitonía). The documents mention fights, "hard times" but do not specify the nature in most Greek cities (Callatis - ISM III 3, Istros - ISM I 12, 18, Tomis - ISM II 2, Mesembria - IGB I2 316).

In Mesembria, the IGBI2 decree 307, proxeny decree, shows an agreement (homologia) between Mesembria and the Thracian king Sadalas through which regulated relations of collaboration between the two parties.

But the most significant are three documents discovered at Istros: a decree from the third century BC. which honors 3 ambassadors who were sent “in respect of the hostages” to the “king” Zalmodegikos (ISM I 8) and two decrees from the end of the same century (ISM I 15 and an unpublished inscription, Sofia) [16].

The first inscription attests to how King Zalmodegikos claimed hostages to be sure that Istros would pay the tribute, as he had all the income the city. It is

the release of hostages and the return of income that are the two facts for which the messengers were rewarded with special honors.

Later, Rhemaxos, king from the left bank of the Danube, protector of the fortress Istros also claimed tribute, only then intervened by driving out the Thracians of Zoltes who periodically plundered the rural territory of Histria. The holder of ISM decree I 15, Antiphilos 'Agathokles as well as Theodoros' Meniskos (holder of the decree of Sofia) are praised for convincing the barbarians (the first the Thracians, al second on Germanic skins) "to retreat". The expression is euphemistic, those who have drafted the decree actually wanting to hide the fact that Istros was buying with hard money survival. Agathokles also made agreements, but the barbarians did violated.

It is mentioned several times that Zoltes' Thracians attacked "when the grain was in the field", which means that the period of the harvest approached [17].

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the food and cooking in the Ancient Romania offer the image of the synthesis between Gets, Dacians, Scythians, Greeks and Romans. The literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources revealed a rich food base and a mixed tradition of cooking. The food was prepared by boiling, by using ovens with fire. The economic relations can be attested by archaeological, epigraphical and literary sources.

Even after the end of Roman authority, the life of autochthonous people remained generally in the coordinates of the Late Antiquity.

### **Abbreviations:**

- CIL III- Theodor Mommsen, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Vol. III, Berlin, 1873.
- IGB I<sup>2</sup> - G. Mihailov, *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertael. Inscriptiones orae Ponti Euxini*. Editio altera emendata, Serdicae 1970.
- IOSPE I 2 *Inscriptiones Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini*, Vol I, Editio altera (edidit B. Latysev), Sankt Petersburg, 1962.
- ISM I *Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor*, Vol.I, (editor D.M. Pippidi), București, 1983.
- ISM II *Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor*, Vol. II, (editor Iorgu Stoian), București, 1987.
- ISM III *Inscriptions de Scythie Mineure*, Vol. III, (éditeur A. Avram), Bucarest-Paris, 1999.

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1. Petre Alexandrescu, *Enciclopedia arheologiei și istoriei vechi a României*, Editura Enciclopedică, vol II, București, 1996, p. 62.
2. Alexandru Avram, în *Istoria Românilor*, Vol. I, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2001, p.551-552; D.M. Pippidi, *Din istoria Dobrogei*, vol. I: *Geți și greci la Dunărea de Jos din cele mai vechi timpuri până la cucerirea romană*, Editura Academiei, București, 1965, *passim*.
3. Alexandru Avram, *op.cit.*, p. 552.
4. Florian Olteanu, *Organizarea politică a coloniilor grecești de pe coasta de vest a Mării Negre. Aspecte istoriografice*, în „Analele Universității din Craiova”, Seria Istorie, Nr. XII, 2007, p.15-36.
5. Melinda Molnar Leila, *Alimentația în Dacia Romană, rezumatul tezei de doctorat*, UBB, Cluj-Napoca, p.18-31.
6. *Ibidem*.
7. CIL III, TabCer XV = IDR I, TabCerDXVI.
8. Livia Buzoianu, *Importurile amforice la Tomis în perioada elenistică*, în “Pontica”, 25, 1992, p. 99-165; A. Avram, *Histria VIII. Les timbres amphoriques I. Thassos*, Bucarest-Paris, 1996, *passim*.
9. Adrian Ardeț, *Amforele din Dacia Romană*, Editura Mirton, Timișoara, 2006, p. 42-58
10. *Ibidem*.
11. *Ibidem*.
12. Doina Benea, *Organizarea pășunilor în Dacia Romană și importanța lor pentru economia provinciei*, în BHAUT, XII, 2010, p. 45-74.
13. Florian Olteanu, *Organizarea politică*, p. 15-36.
14. Alexandru Avram, *Wohltäter des Volkes in den pontischen Städten der spätthellenistischen Zeit*, în „Bürgersinn und staatliche Macht. Festschrift für Wolfgang Schuller zum 65. Geburtstag (edit. Martin Dreher)“, Konstanz, 2000, p. 151-170.
15. Petre Alexandrescu, *L’Aigle et le dauphin. Études d’archeologie pontique*, Bucarest-Paris, 1999, p. 108-117.
16. Florian Olteanu, *Cetățile vest-pontice și vremelnicii cuceritori în ”Analele Universității din Craiova”*, Seria Istorie, Anul XVII, Nr. 2(22)/2012, p.7-18.
17. Idem, *Societatea ateniană oglindită în instituțiile și magistraturile cetății, până la anul 322 a. Chr.*, în „Revista universitară de sociologie”, Anul I, nr.1-2, Craiova, 2005, p.100- 113.