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**“ C. Iulius Proclus, the Pride of a Prolificent Local Producer from Ampelum ”, dans Roman Lead-Glazed Ceramics from the Collection of the National Museum of the Unification Alba Iulia, Cluj, 2021, pp. 37-41**

Dan Dana

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ROMAN  
LEAD-GLAZED  
CERAMICS

FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE  
UNIFICATION ALBA IULIA



# ROMAN LEAD-GLAZED CERAMICS

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Complex analytical methods to study Roman glazed ceramic from Dacian Kingdom for origin establishing of archaeological artifacts, imports/local production, at the Eastern border of Roman Empire (GLAZEX). Nr. 352 PED/2020

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7.

C. IULIUS PROCLUS,  
THE PRIDE OF A  
PROLIFICENT LOCAL  
PRODUCER FROM  
AMPELUM



The producer C. Iulius Proclus is without any doubt the best known *offinator* in Roman Dacia, that certainly furnished variegated items in a given region, as proven by an extraordinary discovery and the signatures that he applied with a great frequency<sup>1</sup>. He was active in Ampelum (today Zlatna), which was the administrative centre of the goldmine exploitation within the Apuseni Mountains, as property of the imperial tax and seat of the *procurator aurariarum* of Dacia. During the Roman presence, Ampelum strongly developed as a mining centre, inhabited, as shown by the epigraphic evidence, by various categories, such as miner settlers (from Dalmatia), but also specialized immigrants from Asia Minor (especially Bithynia), and a servile population (slaves and freedmen, including ones from the imperial house), without neglecting the presence of some military elements.

In the summer of 1984, the rescue excavations at Zlatna conducted by archaeologists from Alba Iulia, accompanied by the tireless engineer Ioan T. Lipovan, revealed a complex of three ceramic kilns belonging to the *officina* of C. Iulius Proclus (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD). The kilns, well-placed nearby the Ampoi River, were dismantled before the construction of the stone buildings, being transformed into garbage pits, while the workshop was moved elsewhere in Ampelum. It was mainly here that archaeologists collected the rests of a variegated ceramic production (whole and fragmentary vessels, and even waster), in many cases providing signatures, as witnesses of a serial production: stamped pottery<sup>2</sup>, vessels decorated in barbotine technique<sup>3</sup> or with an applied decoration<sup>4</sup>, greenish lead-based glaze ceramics<sup>5</sup>, lamps<sup>6</sup>, votive reliefs and statuettes<sup>7</sup>, *mortaria*<sup>8</sup>, and common pottery<sup>9</sup>. The

amazing discovery of such a complex provided a privileged evidence not only for local ceramic production in the province, but also for the “minor epigraphy”.

In the kiln No. 1, the most interesting find was that of a large capacity vase, in a fine homogeneous paste of grey-yellowish colour, partially reconstituted from more than 20 fragments. On its tick walls, decorated before firing with incised geometric patterns – while the flared edge is decorated with simple incisions –, an inscription was incised *ante cocturam* on the neck, under the lip, in an elegant script and decreasing letters (starting with 1.2 cm): G·IVLIVS·PRO[CLVS] FECIT (*ILD I 356a*)<sup>10</sup>, that is *G(aius) · Iulius · Pro[clus] fecit*, “C. Iulius Proclus made this” (Fig. 17).



Fig. 16.  
3D mesh detail of an anthropomorphic lamp  
of ithyphallic Telesphorus,  
signed GIP - *G(aius) I(ulius) P(roclus)*.

In the kiln No. 2, about 20 fragmentary statuettes were found, as rejections of fabrication, some of them being inscribed on their pedestal before firing: a statuette of Attis, signed G·I·P·FE (*ILD I 356c*) (Fig. 14), that is *G(aius)·I(ulius)·P(roclus)·fe(cit)*<sup>11</sup>; a fragmentary anthropomorphic lamp of ithyphallic Telesphorus, signed G·I·P below, inside a *tabula ansata* (*ILD I 356b*) (cat. no.

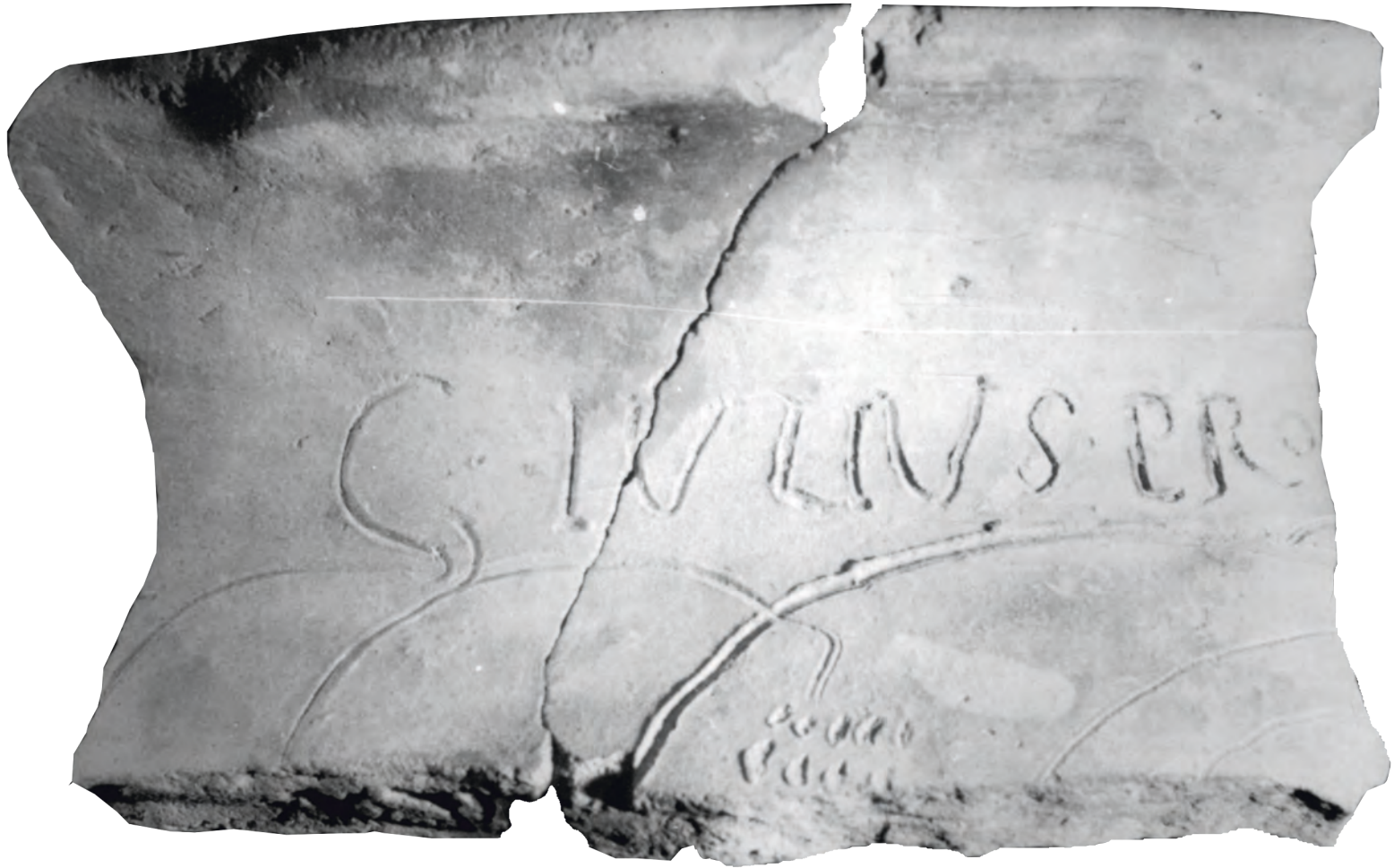


Fig. 17  
Storage vessel fragment with the signature  
*G(aius)-Iulius-Pro[clus] fecit* ("C. Iulius Proclus made this")  
(MNUAI photo archive).



101)<sup>12</sup> (Fig. 16); a statuette of Venus, inscribed G·I·P (cat. no. 102)<sup>13</sup>, different locally produced lamps (type Loeschcke X) with the graffito G·I·P inside a circle or surrounded by two bunch of grapes inside a circle (*ILD I 356d*)<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 18); plaques with Mithraic scenes, among them a fragment inscribed G·I·P on the base (*ILLD I 356e*)<sup>15</sup>.



Fig. 18.  
Lamp with stamp *GIP* surrounded  
with vine stalks and bunches of grapes  
(*MNUAI photo archive*).

Lamps produced in the *officina* of C. Iulius Proclus, as proven by the signatures G·I·P, were found not only in Ampelum, but also nearby, at Apulum<sup>16</sup>, and as far away as the auxiliary fort from Cristești (Mureș county)<sup>17</sup>.

Another piece of evidence, discovered in the same complex in 1984, is an opisthographic private Latin letter on a ceramic tablet (broken in two joining fragments), engraved *ante cocturam* in a mixture of capital and cursive letters. It was sent by our producer

to a friend, as it started with the typical epistolary formula: *G(aius) Iulius Proclus · Lucio fratri meo salutem*, “C. Iulius Proclus to my brother Lucius, greetings!”. This unique document, still unpublished<sup>18</sup>, provides the full name of the producer and concerns maybe the ceramic production.

Finally, the same person could have been the dedicant of an altar to Liber Pater, found illegally at Ampelum before 2012 (only photos were provided): *Liberio | Patri Aug(usto) | sacr(um) | [. ] Iulius | [---] + + us | [---]*<sup>19</sup>. Judging after one of the photos<sup>20</sup>, it is very tempting to restore the name of the dedicant as *[C.] Iulius [Pro]clus*, matching not only with the preserved parts of the letters but also the missing characters.

We ignore the precise origins of our producer, and his *tria nomina* are not very helpful. The *praenomen Caius* is everywhere abridged G (and not C)<sup>21</sup>, as a pronunciation mark (*Gaius*); *Iulius* is a banal *gentilicium*, attested twice or three times at Ampelum<sup>22</sup>; finally, the *cognomen Proclus* is a syncopated form of the frequent *Proculus*. More important is to underline the maniacal signatures of the *offinator*: we may be sure that C. Iulius Proclus was very proud of his extremely diversified productions (of various qualities), that was signed before firing – either in full letters (Fig. 19), either abridged as an acronym – and invaded thereafter not only the region of Ampelum but also adjacent areas.

Dan Dana

## NOTES

1. Lipovan 1983-1984; Popa, Moga, Ciobanu 1986, 112; I. I. Russu, in *IDR*, III.4, 1988, pp. 120-121; Wollmann 1989, 116; Pop 1994, p. 45; Moga 1996, esp. 10; Bărbulescu 2007; Rusu-Bolindeț 2007, 28 and 323.
2. Lipovan 1992-1994a.
3. Lipovan 1996.
4. Lipovan 1988-1991a (with figures).
5. Lipovan 1990; Lipovan 1992-1994b (also with the signature GIP, incised, stamped or in barbotine technique, before firing); Lipovan, Băluță 1995.

6. Lipovan 1984-1985.  
 7. Lipovan 1992a.  
 8. Lipovan 1992b.  
 9. Rusu-Bolindeț 2011, pp. 110-111.  
 10. Lipovan 1983-1984, p. 304 (drawing p. 314, pl. III/8; pl. V/1a-c); Popa, Moga, Ciobanu 1986, p. 112 (photo p. 116, fig. 8/1); Gudea, Cosma 1992, p. 212, no. 53 (drawing p. 236); Moga 1996, p. 11 (photo and drawing p. 14, fig. 3). In the bibliography the verb FECIT is added or supposed by the predecessors, but no photo is provided for such a fragment; I am indebted to Volker Wollmann for documentation and pictures, among them one with the second fragment of this vase, whose reading remains quite unclear. The fragments of the vase seem lost.  
 11. Lipovan 1983-1984, p. 307 (pl. X/5); Popa, Moga, Ciobanu 1986, p. 112 (photo p. 116, fig. 8/2); Wollmann 1989, p. 116 (photo fig. 13a); Lipovan 1990, pp. 289-290, no. 40 (photo p. 278, fig. 4/2b); Lipovan 1992, p. 68, no. 4 (photo p. 67, fig. 3/2a); Moga 1996, p. 11 (photo and drawing p. 115, fig. 4a); Anghel *et alii* 2011, p. 53, no. 52 (photo).  
 12. Lipovan 1983-1984, p. 307 (pl. X/4); Lipovan 1984-1985, p. 146, no. 15 (photo p. 144, pl. II/3); Popa, Moga, Ciobanu 1986, p. 112 (photo p. 116, fig. 8/3); Wollmann 1989, p. 116 (photo p. 117, fig. 13b); Lipovan 1990, p. 289, no. 30 (photo p. 278, fig. 4/1b); Lipovan 1992, pp. 63-66, no. 2 (photos p. 64, fig. 1.2ab; drawing p. 65, fig. 2.1); Moga 1996, p. 11 (photo and drawing p. 115, fig. 4b); Anghel *et alii* 2011, p. 59, no. 66 (photo); Varga 2016, p. 30, no. 1 (photo p. 36, pl. I/2).  
 13. Lipovan 1988-1991a, p. 658 (photo p. 660, pl. I/2a); Anghel *et alii* 2011, p. 40, no. 18 (photo).  
 14. Lipovan 1983-1984, pp. 307-308 (pl. IX/6-7); Lipovan 1984-1985, p. 142 (no. 1), 145 (nos. 2-8) (photos p. 143, pl. I/1-7), pp. 145-146, no. 11-14 (photos p. 143, pl. I/8; p. 144, II/1-2); photo and drawing *IDR*, III.4, 1988, p. 121, fig. 86cb; Moga 1996, p. 11 (drawings p. 116, fig. 5b); Benea 2006, pp. 340, 347 (no. 20), pp. 349 and 354 (no. 7) [= Benea 2008, pp. 307-308, 310, 318-319 (no. 21), 321 (no. 1), 333 (no. 7)]. See also Lipovan 1982-1983 and 1984-1985 (workshop of Iulius Proclus).  
 15. Lipovan 1983-1984, p. 308 (pl. X/7); Lipovan 1990, p. 290, no. 43 (photo p. 283, fig. 6/4); Lipovan 1992-1994b (photo p. 159, pl. II/5).  
 16. Băluță 2003, pp. 103-104, type XXXVII.  
 17. *IDR* III.4 160 (photo and drawing p. 121, fig. 86a). This lamp is similar (but not identical) to the lamps found in the *officina* at Ampelum (kiln no. 2).  
 18. Lipovan 1988b, pp. 59, 66 (no. 12) and p. 69 (photo p. 68, fig. 5/1) (*ILD* I 341, without mentioning the character of private letter); Wollmann 1989, pp. 116 and 118 (photo p. 117, fig. 14). The beginning of the letter is quoted by I. I. Russu (*IDR*, III.4, 1988, p. 121), with an approximate reading: *C. Iulius Proclus*

*Lucio Alexandriano salutem*. This document will be published by V. Wollmann, D. Dana, M. Dana.

19. Ciută, Ciută 2016 (photos and drawing p. 213, pl. I) (*EpRom* 2016-35-006).

I am grateful to Marius Ciută, that provided me the original photos.

20. I am indebted to Marius-Mihai Ciută for this image and additional information.

21. On the signatures (see the illustration), the rendering of this letter G is very similar, always in two times.

22. Cf. a dedication to Isis [*pro salut*]e M(arci) Iul(i) Ap[olli]naris Ver[us] Aug(usti) n(ostri) <et> Romanus Aug(usti) n(ostri) vern(a) (*CIL* III 7837 = *IDR* III.3 332 = AÉ, 2013, 1313); a dedication to Jupiter Optimus Maximus [*pro salut*(e) Statia(e) Festae [C(aius)] Restitutius Iustus et C(aius) Iulius Priscinus (AÉ, 1991, 1346 = *ILD* I 344); and the dedication to Liber Pater of [-] Iulius [-]++us (Ciută, Ciută 2016), maybe our producer (see supra).

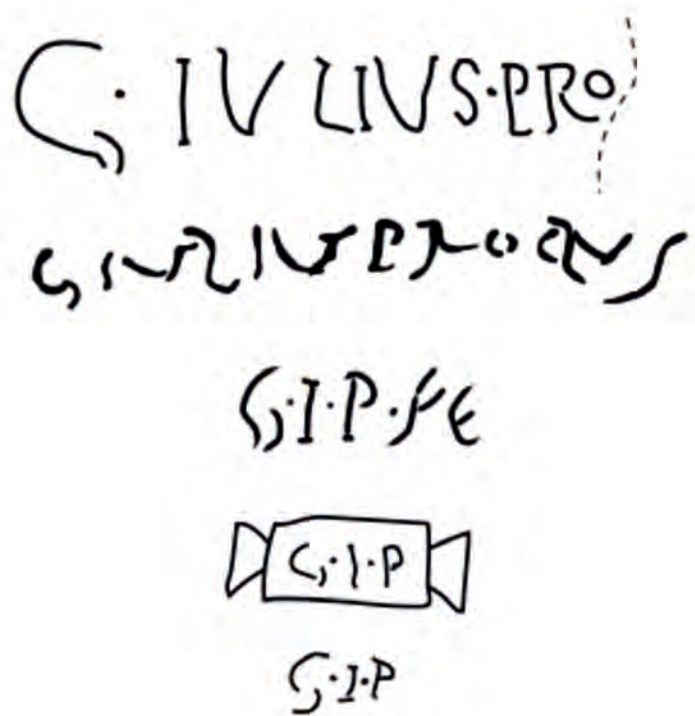


Fig. 19.  
 Types of Caius Iulius Proclus's  
 signatures incised *ante cocturam*.

# 8.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ActaAntHung - Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.  
AIIA - Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj-Napoca.

AJA - American Journal of Archaeology.  
AFJ - The Archaeological Forum Journal, CBA, Yorkshire.

ActaMN - Acta Musei Napocensis, Muzeul de Istorie a Transilvaniei. Cluj-Napoca.

ActaMP - Acta Musei Porolissensis, Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Artă, Zalău.

Arch Ert - Archaeologiai Értesítő.  
Apulum - Apulum, Acta Musei Apulensis, Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia.

Archaeol  
Anthropol Sci - Archaeological and Anthropological Science, Springen.  
BHAUT - Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Universitatis Timisensis, Centrul de Studii de Istorie și Arheologie „Constantin Daicovicu”, Timișoara.

BMA - Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis, Muzeul Național al Unirii Alba Iulia.

BMN	- Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis, Muzeul de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Cluj-Napoca.
CIL	- Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CIMRM	- Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae I-II, Haga, 1956-1960.
Dacia NS	- Dacia. Nouvelle série: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București.
De arch.	- Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, De architectura libri decem.
DocArch	- Documenti di Archeologia, Padova.
IDR III/3	- Inscricțiunile Daciei romane III. Dacia Superior 3, zona centrală (teritoriul dintre Ulpia Traiana, Micia, Apulum, Alburnus Maior, Valea Crișului), (I. I. Russu, Oct. Floca, V. Wollmann), București, 1984.
IDR III/4	- Inscricțiunile Daciei Romane. III, Dacia Superior 4, zona răsăriteană (I.I. Russu), București, 1988.
NH	- Plinius Secundus, <i>Naturalis Historia</i> .
Peuce	- Peuce, Institutul de Cercetări Eco-Muzeale, Tulcea.
Potaissa	- Potaissa, Studii și comunicări, Turda.
RAE	- Revue Archéologique de l'Est, Société archéologique de l'Est, Dijon.
RB	- Revista Bistriței, Complexul Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița.
RCRFActa	- Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautores.
Sargetia	- Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva.
SCIVA	- Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie, București.
StudiaUBB	- Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca.
Tibiscum	- Tibiscum (Studii și comunicări. Etnografie. Istorie), Caransebeș.

## CATALOGUE ABBREVIATIONS

- L - Length
- w - width
- H - Height
- D. b. - Diameter base
- D. r. - Diameter rim





*Roman Lead-Glazed Ceramics from The Collection of The National Museum of Unification Alba Iulia* is the first ever attempt of this kind in the study of Roman lead-glazed pottery from Roman Dacia, being in this respect a very important and necessary one.

The volume presents both the history and the technological fabrication process of glazed pottery as well as the contexts for this type of discoveries as made at Apulum and Ampelum. The artefact catalogue presents the typological variety of this fascinating Roman ceramic, represented through fragmentary or complete pottery, some of them never before published.

In addition to the expected analytical data, our research has allowed the identification and methodical valorisation of the Roman glazed ceramics kept in the exhibition and in the deposits of the National Museum of the Unification from Alba Iulia, which is one of the largest collections of this kind in the Roman province of Dacia.

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