



## Summary :

Orgame is situated on the estuary of the Danube. The city was recently identified thanks to archaeological evidence. It is one of the earliest purely Greek colonies in the Black Sea. Successive habitation until the 7th century makes it difficult to extract conclusions about the urban network and the economic and political life of the city in Antiquity. The necropolis of Orgame is one of the best excavated in the wider region.

## Other Names

Orgame (6th-1st c. BC), Argamum (Roman years), Argamon (Roman and Byzantine years), possibly Constantiana (in Byzantine years)

## Geographical Location

Cape Dolojman; Jurilovca, province of Tulcea (Romania)

## Historical Region

Moesia Inferior

## 1. Anthropogeography

### 1.1. Geographical Location

Ancient Orgame, a colony of [Miletus](#), was relatively recently located on Cape Dolojman, on the estuary of the Danube, to the northeast of the little town of Jurilovca of the province of Tulcea, Romania.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.2. Written Sources

The place-name “Orgame” is reported by Stephanus Byzantius in his work *Ethnika* (“Orgame. A city on the Istros River”),<sup>2</sup> when he mentions the geographical work of [Hecataeus of Miletus](#),<sup>3</sup> and by Prokopios of Caesarea in *Buildings*, who refers to the settlement of his time (Argamon). The above sources contain only indirect information, without providing either accurate historical and geographical evidence or any specific chronological reference.

### 1.3. Ethnological Evidence

Archaeological finds from the necropolis confirm the existence of a purely Greek population at least until the city was occupied by the Romans. Traces of the preexistent Babadag civilization are dated up to the 9th c. BC.<sup>4</sup> There is no evidence of any conflict or coexistence of colonists with native populations during colonization (mid-7th c. BC).

## 2. Economy

Orgame was built on sea and overland commercial routes. According to archaeological finds, it was a prosperous city and carried out commercial transactions with Greek cities and native populations. However, no coins minted by Orgame have been found so far.

## 3. Polity

Archaeological finds and written sources indicate that Orgame was an organised settlement within the framework of the term “polis” from the late Archaic period until the 5th c. BC.<sup>5</sup> At some moment, Orgame possibly became a colony subordinated to the city of [Histros](#), though it cannot be proved. Yet in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, Argamum (Argamon) was independent from Histros, according to indirect evidence from two Roman inscriptions.<sup>6</sup>



#### 4. Urban Development

Successive layers of habitation and terraces made for the creation of a stable underlayer can be seen in Orgame. The earliest buildings found so far include two houses from the Late Archaic period and nine buildings from the period between the 5th and the 2nd c. BC. An eminent position is held by the EG building (second quarter of 4th-first quarter of 3rd c. BC), part of which must have been used for rituals. They are simple structures on the ground. Their masonry is quite thin using a combination of processed stones and plinths. Part of a Hellenistic road that used to be aligned with the buildings has been preserved. Only a limited section of the city wall (5th-3rd c.) has been traced, though it does not help in extracting conclusions about its direction.

The architectural remains of the early Christian centuries (until the 5th c.) are rare. The last period of Argamon's habitation (5th-7th c.) is characterised by rebuilding and refortification of the city, while earlier buildings were pulled down. The wall was 800 m long and the city covered an area of 2.6 hectares.<sup>7</sup>

#### 5. Necropolis

The necropolis<sup>8</sup> lies to the northwest of the city, within approximately a distance of 1km. The burial area is arranged in family plots, separated by roads. It is a necropolis of tumuli, most of which have been destroyed due to intensive farming in the area. The dead were mostly cremated. Grave goods include mainly vessels of all kinds, while metal objects and coins are rather rare.

##### 5.1. T A95 Tomb

The diameter of the tumuli ranges from 2 to 8 m. However, T A95 stands out thanks to its monumental 42 m diameter; it is described as a heroon and was a place of worship, probably belonging to one of the first settlers.<sup>9</sup>

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1. Mănuacu-Adameş teanu, M., "Orgame", in Grammenos, D.V. – Petropoulos, E.K. (edit.), *Ancient Greek Colonies in the Black Sea 1* (Publications of the Archaeological Institute of Northern Greece 4, Thessaloniki 2003), pp. 341-388, including all previous bibliography.

2. *FGrHist* I, fr. 172

3. Hecataeus, *Περίοδος Γης ή Περιήγησις: Ευρώπη* (6th-5th c. BC).

4. This period provides specific architectural structures and pottery.

5. Supposing that the letter "o" in the inscription of Thoudippus' resolution is completed as "Orgame". For the resolution: Meritt, B.D. – Wade-Grey, H.T. – McGregor, F., *The Athenian Tribute Lists 1* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1939): A9 = IG 13, 425/424 BC. For the arguments: Avram, A., "Poleis und nicht Poleis im Ersten und Zweiten Attischen Seebund," in Mogens, H.H. – Raaflaub, K. (edit.), *Studies in Ancient Greek Polis*, (Historia Einzelschrift 95, Stuttgart 1995), pp. 197-198, n. 30.

6. The inscriptions report the ethnic names "Argamensium" and "Argamemos". In the inscription bearing the 2nd c. AD resolution, the governor of Moesia Inferior, Mannius Laberius Maximus, defines the boundaries of the province of Histros: to the north it bordered "do[minimum] Argamensium" (the community of the inhabitants of Argamum). The 3rd c. inscription contains the names of Olbian generals, including "Poplius Aelius Argamemos" – which proves that he came from Argamon and acquired Olbian citizenship.

7. Only four early Christian basilicas have been excavated so far.

8. Lungu, V., "Necropoles Grecques du Pont Gauche: Istros, Orgamé, Tomis, Callatis", in Grammenos, D.V. – Petropoulos, E.K. (edit.), *Ancient Greek Colonies in the Black Sea 2.1* (BAR International Series 1675, Oxford 2007), pp. 337-382.



9. Lungu, V., "Necropoles Grecques du Pont Gauche: Istros, Orgamé, Tomis, Callatis", in Grammenos, D.V. – Petropoulos, E.K. (edit.), *Ancient Greek Colonies in the Black Sea 2.1* (BAR International Series 1675, Oxford 2007), pp. 337-382, particularly pp. 346-348.

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Webliography :



Orgame

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