

**ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA UNIVERSITY OF IAȘI
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DOCTORAL SCHOOL

THE BEGINNING OF THE IRON AGE IN SOUTHERN MOLDAVIA

- ABSTRACT -

Scientific coordinator:

Phd. Attila LÁSZLÓ

Joint coordinator:

Phd. Lucrețiu MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA

Phd. Student:

Adrian-Ionuț ADAMESCU

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The end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age in the Lower Danube is characterized by the emergence of new archaeological synthesis, a gradual phenomenon that led to the replacement of the Coslogeni Sabatinovka culture with new central and south-Eastern European elements. This new type of civilization manifests itself in the south of Moldavia through a series of groups characterized by a groove incised pottery.

This dissertation focuses on the analysis of a time period between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age in southern Moldavia. Thus, there are analyzed a series of cultural events, known in the literature as the Tămăoani group, Babadag culture, Cozia group, Stoicani group, and Basarabi phenomenon. The study builds on the researches already conducted and published, as well as on unpublished material provided by some researchers.

The Tămăoani group

Of all the elements assigned to the Tamaoani group by Bernard Hansel and analyzed by Attila László, the eponymous settlement, the necropolis from Foltesti, and the fortified settlement from Candesti, in Vrancea county, remained in question. To this analysis we may also introduce the Negrileşti settlement, Galatzi county. These findings are notified on a geographical area comprising the Covurlui Plain, the Barlad plateau and the Moldavian Subcarpathians.

Due to the research, the information on the habitat complexes are scarce. The settlements have a one single level of habitation and a small number of complexes, mostly pits. All findings are near freshwater sources, on the dominant terraces or promontories. Archaeological data is gathered only from the Negrileşti settlement, Galatzi county, where there is notified the presence of bovine species (*Bos taurus*), sheep (*Ovis aries*), goat (*Capra hircus*), pigs (*Sus domesticus*), dogs (*Canis familiaris*) and horse (*Equus caballus*) and the wild are represented only by aurochs (*Bos primigenius*), boar (*Sus scrofa*) and wolf (*Canis lupus*). The data shows a main occupation in the economy, documented by bone household garbage.

As to the way of life in Late Bronze Age, we can say that it presents a more sedentary nature. The settlements have housing surface and they are buried in soil. The sedentary lifestyle is aggravated by climate and soil conditions favorable for agriculture and grazing specific to the steppe zone.

Concerning the funerary behaviour, we notify two observations. The complexes with human bones from the Foltesti cemetery have traces of manipulation or reburial which would represent a final stage of Tamaoani group, while the findings have similarities to the other findings from the Babadag culture.

The Tamaoani group pottery is the most important category of artifacts. Overall, we could identify five categories of pottery marked with letters A to E. In these categories we have identified 14 ways of differentiated producing ways, based on the whole containers.

The analysis of ceramic batch from Tamaoani, Foltesti and Negrileşti, gave us the opportunity to see some preference for certain categories of pottery. The prevailing are bitronconic vessels, cups, vases and pot bowls. At the same time, this analysis allowed us to observe a certain preference for decoration. If in the Tamaoani settlement and Foltesti cemetery the cups are decorated by incision, a different thing is notified in the Negrileşti settlement, where this method is used only in small measure. But, this may also reflect the present state of research.

As to chronology, Sebastian Morintz argued that there are no links to local cultural background, especially to Noua and Coslogenicultures, but the presence of the Coslogeni

ceramic type in settlements such as the Garvan-Mlăjitul Florilor¹, Siliștea-Conac², Satu Nou or Negriștești³, in association with the Babadag pottery, come to contradict those mentioned by Sebastian Morintz.

Of the information displayed above, we see that between the two groups with incised pottery from the Lower Danube there are no differences to be treated differently, but there are major prerequisites to consider them as part of one and the same culture. Thus, concerning the area, the phase I of the Babadag culture occupies a space that contains the north of Dobrogea, south Moldavia and north-est of Wallachia. In our opinion, the findings assigned to the Tămăoani group restrict to the south of Moldavia (Tămăoani, Foltesti). As it can be seen, the two groups occupy neighboring areas.

Overall, the typological and stylistic repertoire of the pottery discovered in the two groups can be considered quite uniform. In terms of vessel form, the absence of certain types in one group or another, can be attributed to a reduced research of the area settlements. The difference is represented by the lack of the decoration made of concentric circles connected by tangents, considered by Sebastian Morintz as characteristic to the Babadag culture. This type of decoration can only be found on the bitruncated vessels, but on no other types of pottery. The same goes for the ceramics from Bălteni, Ghindărești, Vânători. In the latter case, the setting described above is found on the two cups that have been discovered. Concerning the Tămăoani settlement, the only vessels decorated with incisions are the cups and their decoration with different combinations of lines which have similarities to the ceramics assigned the the new phase of the Babadag culture.

The same situation occurs in the discovery from Ijdileni, which can be attributed to the Tămăoani group, the seven illustrated sherds providing from cups decorated with incised lines. Thus, we believe it is difficult to set a chronological limit between the two groups. The argument of the stylistic difference between the settlements of Tămăoani and Vanatori can remain a landmark but can also be made on behalf of research gaps.

As a conclusion, the incised ceramic cultures of the Lower Danube can be classified chronologically as post-Noua / Coslogeni, between which there is the housing type Corlateni from Candesti, considered by Attila László as part of the early stage of this culture dated from early XI century BC⁴.

The Babadag culture.

In his article dated 1964⁵, Sebastian Morintz, trying to explain the formation on the Babadag culture, observed that it did not evolved from the final Bronze local cultures and that its origin must be sought in Central Europe, where there has been a massive displacement of populations towards E.⁶ And he thought that there is a gap between the beginning of the Iron Age (Ha A1) and early Babadag culture.

In 1967, Florian Anastasiu and Nicholas Harțuche published the two inhumation graves from Ramnicelu, Braila County⁷, whereas, in 1972, Nicholas Harțuche, based on the findings from Ramnicelu and those from Sihleanu, Braila County⁸, suggests the Prebabadag term, considering this as making the transition from the final Bronze to the early Iron Age⁹.

¹ Morintz, 1964, p. 111; Morintz, 1971, p. 19

² Sîrbu, Pandrea, 1994, p. 32.

³ Adamescu, Ilie, 2011.

⁴ László, 1994, p. 125-130.

⁵ Morintz, 1964, p. 101-180.

⁶ Morintz, 1964, p. 111, 114.

⁷ Anastasiu., Harțuche, 1967, p. 19-39.

⁸ Harțuche, 1972, p. 59-75.

⁹ Harțuche, 1972, p. 73.

Regarding the geographical distribution of Babadag settlements in southern Moldavia, their record showed that most of them are focused in the southern part of the Covurlui Plain, however, to the north, the number of discoveries decreases. Due to the fact that very few discoveries were made in the north of Galatzi county, the findings from Cavadinești and Suceava can be considered as the northern limit of the Babadag culture. Currently, in the southern part between the Carpathians and Prut, there is reported a total number of 17 settlements in which there were found pottery fragments characteristic of this culture, most of which known from research surveys or systematic excavations. The settlements are located near waterways and terraces, and there are no reported traces of artificial fortification of short term, having only one level of habitation.

Regarding the housing complexes, there is little information. There have been reported both houses buried in ground, as well as surface dwellings. At Sendreni, Nicolae Gostar investigates such housing, and, at Suceava, there have been identified two recessed settlements. The presence of surface dwellings is reported by the researches from Vanatori conducted by Mihalache Brudiu, where there were identified two potential settlements, with a layer of ash splice and the plan took the form of splice pieces which fingerprints on one side of the reed¹⁰. Due to the research conducted by Marilena Florescu and Mircea Nicu, at Vanatori, other two surface settlements are being reported.

As a result of the Babadag culture housing research, it was established that the preferred type of housing space was absorbed in the soil, with 57 homes found in Wallachia, about 40 found in Dobrodgea and only four homes in southern Moldova.

The presence of some small clay paved, suggests the existence of a housing area, whose reconstruction is difficult to identify without pits in order to identify an ordering superstructure.

The archaeological researches of a number of 15 bell-shaped pits, at Stoicani settlement, with depths of up to -2.00 m, the osteological material and fragments of vases and ash, have concluded that these pits were used for waste storage household and not for keeping supplies¹¹.

As to the Suceava settlement, the first stage of research (1968-1977), led by John T. Dragomir, led to the observation that the first Iron Age habitation is situated in the mid-west perimeter, while the 1988 - 1990 research, shows an extension of it to about 200 m north of the *Stoborăni* ravine, an area where there have not been found, however, remains of the Basarabi type culture.

At Suceava-Stoborăni, the excavations led to the discovery of 29 complexes identified as pits or waste. For the Ijdileni-Frumusica settlement, the information on these complexes is described briefly. The same situation goes for the Vanatori settlement. The five household pits found in the A and B area come to complete the statistical picture.

As to the funeral behaviour in southern Moldova, the findings are limited to the collective mortuary tomb from the Suceava-Stoborăni complex, the Tamaoani settlement and the Foltesti cemetery. Next to the Suceava collective grave, two other graves¹² are being added to the scientific circle.

Regarding the collective grave at Suceava, investigated in 1971, Ion T. Dragomir said that *in the pit were found four human skeletons in an unusual position, which, at first glance, gives the impression that the dead were thrown into the pit and fall randomly*¹³, and includes the in the Suceava tomb in the Basarabi phenomenon, with similarities to the collective graves from Gomolova (Serbia) and Salacea, Bihor County.

¹⁰ Brudiu, 1980, p. 398.

¹¹ Petrescu-Dîmbovița, 1953a, p.132.

¹² Adamescu, 2011, p.392.

¹³ Dragomir 1996, p.365-366.

Since the collective grave from Gomolova is not characteristic to the Basarabi phenomenon, and the closest analogy to the tomb of Suceava can be found at Jurilovca-*Orgame*¹⁴, the complex with human bones from Suceava can be attributed to the Babadag culture. At Suceveni – Stoborăni, two other cases were investigated, having numerous analogies in neighboring areas. During the processing of the archaeological material we could observe that the graves were located randomly, but they were arranged in an arc shape.

Within the Babadag cultural area, the human bones complexes are numerous, especially in settlements assigned to phases II and III¹⁵, Jijila-Cetatuie¹⁶, Niculitel-Cornet¹⁷, Revărsarea-*Dealul Tichilești*¹⁸, Enisala-Palanca¹⁹, Capidava-La Bursuci²⁰, Bucu-*Pochină*²¹, etc.

So far, the pottery remains the only classification criterion for the chronological including of the Babadag ornamented style discoveries. Pottery is well known as being a guiding fossil for the archaeological research in order to define the cultural phenomena in their time periods, and not least, in establishing cultural sincronism. On the Babadag culture pottery, Sebastian Morintz said: "by its abundance and specifics, the pottery allows us to trace the origin, the spread and the cultural relations with nearby Babadag cultures"²².

A similar approach is made by Gabriel Jugănaru: "*The main archaeological material in studying the origin, the evolution and the cultural environments connections, for the Babadag culture, is represented by pottery*"²³.

The amount of the ceramic analysed as belonging to the Babadag culture, in southern Moldavia, allowed the identification of four categories of pottery marked with A, B, C, D, as well as 23 ways of achieving. Overall, we can distinguish several types of vessels. The potts presented in all the Iron Age settlements, are represented by specimens found at Suceveni, Cavadinesti, Ijdileni-Frumusica, decorated by grooves disposed on the lip.

The cups can be found in the Suceveni group in a of 73 whole and fragmentary specimens of different sizes. At the Vanatori settlement, there are only 21 cups, while at the Ijdileni Frumusica there are only six copies. Most pieces are fragmentary, in most cases having only the upper or middle part, others having only fragments of handles. However, the preserving elements suggest a bitruncated form, flared and the straight edge or shaped umbo.

They were made of a good quality paste that was composed of sand and crushed stones, colors ranging from dark gray to black, most of which are polished. Handles fragments found at Suceava or Ijdileni-Frumusica²⁴ suggest different ways of achieving. Some specimens are flat or oval, decorated by incision, similar to cases reported in the settlements from *Ostrov-Piatra Frecatei*²⁵, *Siliștea-Popină*²⁶, *Satu Nou-Valea lui Voicu*²⁷, *Garvăn-Mlăjitul Florilor*²⁸.

¹⁴ Ailincăi, Mirițoiu, Soficaru, 2006, p.89, nota 38; Ailincăi, 2008, p.15.

¹⁵ Jugănaru 2005, p. 32-41; Ailincăi et al. 2007, p. 80-84; Ailincăi 2008, p. 11-13; Ailincăi, Constantinescu 2008, p. 121-122.

¹⁶ Sîrbu, Ailincăi, Simion, 2008, p.52, fig. 17.

¹⁷ Jugănaru, Topoleanu, 1994, 71-81; Topoleanu, Jugănaru, 1995, 204-205; Ailincăi, Topoleanu, 2003, p.45-50; Ailincăi, Mirițoiu, Soficaru, 2006, p.88; Ailincăi 2008a, p.17-18; Ailincăi 2008b.

¹⁸ Ailincăi, 2010a; Haimovici, 2003.

¹⁹ Jugănaru, Ailincăi 2004, p.118-119; Ailincăi 2008, 13; Ailincăi, Constantinescu, 2008.

²⁰ Ailincăi 2008a, p.13.

²¹ Ailincăi, Mirițoiu, Soficaru, 2006, p.88; Ailincăi, 2008, p.12; Rența, 2008, p.75.

²² Morintz, 1987, p.46.

²³ Jugănaru, 2005, p.47.

²⁴ Brudiu, 1991, p.225.

²⁵ Hänsel, 1976, Taf. 46/9.

²⁶ Harțușche, Silvestru, 1992, p.17-24.

²⁷ Irimia, Conovici, 1993, 76, 82, fig. 11/9; fig. 14/8a.

²⁸ Jugănaru, 2005, p.118, fig. 24/3,6.

There are 27 jar vessels at the Suceveni settlement, although we do not exclude the possibility of a higher number given the fragmented state. At Vanatori, we were able to reconstruct a number of 40 pieces. In the case of the specimens that could be graphically reconstructed some observations can be made. Modeled in stock, they generally have a bitruncated form, with a curved shape and with a slightly flaring edge. As a decorative element, all specimens have in common a cellular belt disposed horizontally and, in some cases, their arrangement was seen as a brace.

At Suceveni, this is the only copy that has a similar shape to a cup. Worked in a coarse paste, its walls were coloured in yellow-brick. Vessels of this type have been found in settlements of Jijila-Cetatuie²⁹, Bucu-Pochina, Platonesti-Valea Babii³⁰, Hansca-La Matca³¹.

Miniature vessels are represented by two fragmentary copies. The first mimics a bowl worked in a fine paste having crushed stones, having a polished surface. The second copy retains only a biconical vessel body.

The cultural framing of the discoveries made at Vanatori has been discussed in various studies. Originally, Mihalache Brudiu attributed some findings, those with incised parallel lines and dots made of bronze³². Later, Bernard Hansel includes them in the ceramic group Tamaoani³³. The archaeological research conducted by Mihalache Brudiu, in 1970, led to the discovery of incised pottery having analogies in Babadag culture, which led the author to classify the habitation in the latter culture³⁴.

In a study dated in 1983, the authors Adrian C. Florescu and Marilena Florescu note that during the 1973-1974 research from Vanatori, a Noua housing has been identified, followed by a Hallstatt³⁵ settlement type, but the material recovered by the courtesy of Mr. Mircea Nicu, from the Museum of Tecuci, does not reveal this fact. Moreover, within the recovered batch, we were able to identify a number of containers decorated by printing that is similar to Phase II of the Babadag culture.

In 1986, Attila László analyzed the Tamaoani and Vanatori discoveries, and notes that the Vanatori findings have an ornamental motif, with tangent circles, a setting specific to the Babadag culture. The author observes a chronological gap analysis and propose two phases, for the Tamaoani group: a phase I, including findings from the eponymous settlement and from the Foltesti cemetery, and a phase II, with findings from Vanatori and Candesti³⁶.

Therefore, based on the discoveries made by Mihalache Brudiu, at Vanatori, and on the archaeological material derived from the research between 1973-1974, to which we add the pottery recovered by myself, I believe we may include the Vanatori settlement into the Babadag culture, with the observation that the habitation may have had at least two stages, although, stratigraphically, it has not been demonstrated. The first phase characterized by pottery with incised decoration similar to the old Babadag level, and the second phase characterized by incised and printed pottery specific to phase II of the Babadag culture.

The same author, Mihalache Brudiu, due to the archaeological research conducted in 1988, in the settlement of Ijdileni-Frumusita-*Via lui Ion Ciurea*, considers that some part of the discoveries may belong to the Tamaoani group, while the remaining findings are attributed to the Babadag culture (phase I and II), followed by the discoveries belonging to the

²⁹ Sîrbu, Ailincăi, Simion, 2008, p.75.

³⁰ Rența, 2008, p.98.

³¹ Nicic, 2008, p.198, fig. 48/6.

³² Brudiu, 1970, p. 513.

³³ Hänsel, 1976, p. 144.

³⁴ Brudiu, 1981, p. 532-533.

³⁵ Florescu, Florescu, 1983b, p. 74, n. 19.

³⁶ Florescu, Florescu, 1983b, p. 72.

Basarabi culture³⁷. In 1994, the author returns with a new research, and mentions the same stratigraphic position. Thus, there is mentioned a total number of 9 complexes, listed in the category of holes, two housing complexes and a platform of packed clay, partially calcined. One is assigned to the Tamaoani group, while the clay platform is considered to be placed at the underlying settlement belonging to the Babadag II-III. We have no mention about the housing complex, while the respective nine holes belong to the Basarabi culture, as well as the to the Middle Ages³⁸.

Compare to the text published in 1991, in which the situation is somehow confused, the complexes investigated in 1994 have a more than incomplete information. The ceramic fragments decorated by incision, consisting of horizontal lines in the middle of the vessel, and the series of oblique lines on both sides of the conical projections, were found near the pit and were awarded to the Tamaoani group. Analogy for this type can be found in Dobrodgea, in the settlement of Babadag³⁹, but also at Niculișel-Cornet⁴⁰, Ostrov-Piatra Frecatei⁴¹, Garvan-Mlăjitul Florilor⁴² or Jijila-Cetatuie⁴³. For the geographical areas related to Dobrodgea, we may mention the discoveries from Brailita⁴⁴, Tamaoani⁴⁵, or Platonesti-Valea Babii,⁴⁶.

Based on the ceramic decoration, the archaeological finds from Suceveni-Stoborăni were assigned to the Tamaoani group⁴⁷, along with other sites specific to this group, such as Foltesti⁴⁸, Rogojeni⁴⁹, Ijdileni-Frumusita⁵⁰, Vanatori⁵¹, or Galatzi-Precista⁵². However, after studying the entire batch ceramic, and based on the presence of default made by printing, we may conclude that the early Hallstatt settlement discovered at Suceveni-Stoborăni is, undoubtedly, attributed to the Babadag culture.

Thus, the pottery remains, so far, the only criterion for the chronological classification for the findings from Suceveni. Statistically, there is a preference for incised decoration, unlike print, which is present in fewer copies.

The analysis above shows that the majority of such vessels, the proportion of 82%, were decorated by incision, followed by examples decorated by printing, in 10% and 8%, decorated with grooves. The presence of printed motifs provides a chronological synchronism with the Babadag groups II⁵³, Insula Banului⁵⁴, Saharna-Solonceni⁵⁵, Pšeničevo⁵⁶ and Cozia, indicating a chronological sequence located somewhere between sec. X-IX centuries BC.

The preference for incised motifs could indicate the placement of the findings from Suceveni, the northernmost site of Babadag culture, in the early phase II of this culture. The geographical location of the site, and the lack of decorated ceramic fragments, at Cozia, which

³⁷ Brudiu, 1991, p. 223.

³⁸ Brudiu, 1995, p.45.

³⁹ Morintz 1964, p.109.

⁴⁰ Topoleanu, Jugănar, 1995, p.208, fig. 8/1.

⁴¹ Hänsel, 1976, Taf. 46/9.

⁴² Jugănar, 1997, p.108.

⁴³ Sîrbu, Ailincăi, Simion, 2008, p. 64.

⁴⁴ Harțușe, Anastasiu, 1976, p.184-185.

⁴⁵ László, 1986, fig. 5/B 1-3.

⁴⁶ Rența, 2008, fig. 87/10-11.

⁴⁷ László, 1986, p.74, nota 11; Brudiu 1991, p.231.

⁴⁸ László, 1986, p.67.

⁴⁹ Dragomir, 1970, p.507, fig. 5/2.

⁵⁰ Brudiu, 1991, p.221.

⁵¹ Brudiu, 1991, p.221.

⁵² Brudiu, 1991, p.221.

⁵³ Morintz, 1964, p.101-118; Morintz, 1987, p.39-72.

⁵⁴ Morintz, Roman, 1969, p.393-423.

⁵⁵ László, 1972, p.207-224; Hänsel 1976, p.134-151.

⁵⁶ Čičikova, 1971, p.71-92; Hänsel, 1976, p.196-213.

appear in other sites such as those from Stoicani-Cetatuie⁵⁷, Buu-Pochina⁵⁸, or Revarsarea-Dealul Tichilești⁵⁹, all these may indicate an early habitation of the Suceveni settlement from Babadag group, compared with the appearance of Cozia group, or at least an earliest dating from the above sites.

Sebastian Morintz noted that the transition of the second phase was perceived in the eponymous settlement both stratigraphically and typologically, the main reason being the emergence of printing⁶⁰. Chronologically, the incised ceramic horizon of the Lower Danube is followed by the printed decorated ceramic cultures such as the Babadag type II and Cozia.

The chronology of this phase is given by the pixide lid, that finds analogies to the one discovered in tomb no. 37 of the Kerameikos, in Athens, which represents the period of the late protogeometric⁶¹ (IX century BC). Another argument which argues for dating in sec. X-IX centuries BC., is the discovery of two pottery fragments having a decoration characteristic to phase II of the Babadag culture, found at Pățitel, in Brasov, located within the cultural setting Medias⁶².

Another argument in favor of a chronological setting of X-IX centuries BC., are the findings from Stoicani and Vanatori, which are notified decorations specific to Babadag II and Cozia⁶³. At Stoicani-Cetatuie, Mircea Petrescu-Dimbovita illustrates a number of containers with a Cozia decoration together with archaeological materials of Babadag type II. A clearer view of the cultural enrollment of the Stoicani settlement could be solved when the archaeological material found in the settlement of Stoicani would be introduced in the whole scientific circle.

Cozia Group

The archaeological research from Babadag and Insula Banului⁶⁴ led to the discovery of a ceramic type patterned by printing and with decorations similar to those from Babadag, which is the reason why Sebastian Morintz believed there is a cultural complex of Thracian origin which includes the cultural groups of Babadag II, Cozia, Insula Banului, Saharna - Solonceni, Pșenicevo⁶⁵.

In the present state of research, the settlements remain the main discoveries of this culture. The most of information is gathered from the research area. In terms of geographical distribution, we see that the majority of discoveries are concentrated in the Barlad Plateau, with a number of 18 discoveries. However, in the south of the Covurlui Plain, there have been recorded two discoveries, one at Stoicani-Cetatuie and Vanatori - la Jolica, where we could find Cozia decorated pottery.

The information about Cozia settlements is gathered from the researches made in settlements such as the eponymous settlement⁶⁶, Pocreaca⁶⁷, Brad⁶⁸, Răcățau⁶⁹ or Brădicești⁷⁰.

⁵⁷ Petrescu-Dîmbovița, 1953b, fig. 62/7-8.

⁵⁸ Rența, 2008, fig. 121/1-4.

⁵⁹ Ailincăi, 2010a, fig. 23/4; 25/7.

⁶⁰ Morintz, 1987, p. 63.

⁶¹ Hänsel, 1976, I, p.133.

⁶² Alexandrescu, Pop, 1970, p.161-165.

⁶³ Petrescu - Dîmbovița, 1953a, fig. 62.

⁶⁴ Morintz, Roman, 1969, p. 420.

⁶⁵ Morintz, Symposia Thracologica, 1985, p. 106.

⁶⁶ László, 1972, p.207-224.

⁶⁷ Iconomu, 1996, p. 21-56; 1997, p.127-128.

⁶⁸ Ursachi, 1968, p.171, 173, 176; 1980, p.178; 1995, p.22, 284; 2007, p.48-49.

⁶⁹ Căpitanu, 1982, p.51-56; 1992, p.133-134; 1997, p.113-117; Ursachi, 2007, p.46-47.

⁷⁰ Iconomu, 1997, p.128; 2002, p. 99-107.

The settlements of the Cozia culture were located on high places or environments in the vicinity of headlands, plateaux or terraces of rivers located in the vicinity of water sources. For the western area of Cozia culture, there is information about the existence of fortified settlements at Pocreaca-Cetatuie⁷¹ and Brad⁷², and for the eastern area, at Saharna Mare⁷³.

For the south part of Moldavia, the discoveries led to the conclusion that, in this area, only open settlements are being present. The dwelling structures specific to Cozia were located generally in the highlands, the hills, especially in Central Moldavian Plateau, where most of the discoveries are focused.

Similar to the Babadag culture, we can see a semi-recessed housing preference, buried in the soil, a total number of 16 discoveries, compared to the only 8 settlements already discovered.

The surface sttlements were raised in a wooden framework plastered with clay, being oriented rectangular NESV, NW-SE or NS. Their surface varies, the lowest being attested to Saharna Mica, only 6.7 hectares, and the largest in the settlement of Alcedar III, with an area of 98 m², with heating facilities, such stoves and fireplaces in the form of vatra⁷⁴.

The semi-buried constructions, rectangular or oval shaped, oriented NS, EW and NE-SW, with an area between 4m² and 30 m², have been identified in the settlements of Alcedar III, Glinjeni, Saharna - Dealul Manastirii, Cozia, Saharna Minor or Solonceni. Worth mentioning is the construction of Saharna Minor, where there were observed 18 small sound holes and a larger scale, however assuming the existence of a conical roof. A similar situation was observed in one of the semibordeiele. Cozia, which probably had a single roof water⁷⁵.

The settlements buried in the ground had an oval shape, oriented NS and EW, with an area ranging between 4.0 m² and 7.8 m², heated with mobile facilities, and a number of construction features such as corridors or entrances⁷⁶.

Potholes are part of the housing structures, and they are designed as storage of goods and household refuse. Such complexes have been investigated at Cozia, where five were reported as conical pits, the holes 3 and 4 were close to the pit no. 1⁷⁷; at Pocreaca and Brad⁷⁸, two pits were excavated, with tronconic domestic form⁷⁹.

During the analysis of the Cozia pottery, we could identify four ceramic categories, marked, as in other cases, with A, B, C and D. Within each group we have seen different ways of achieving. For group A, we could identify two ways of making bitronconic vessels. In group B, we observed seven ways of making cups, while for group C, bowls have several ways to be produced, but due to their fragmentary state, our analysis was limited to general presentation. The last category identified is group D, characteristic to jar vessels, similar to those in group C.

Having two warehouses and a few stray finds, the metal (bronze and iron) provides important data on the practice of metallurgy by the early Hallstatt populations in southern Moldavia. In the southern part, there were discovered two warehouses belonging to the Ha.B1-B2 and seven socketed axes.

For an absolute chronology for dating the Cozia group, we may use the fibula from Brad, dated X-IX centuries BC., by Alexander Vulpe⁸⁰ and later by Bernard Hansel, who

⁷¹ Iconomu, 1996, p.21-56.

⁷² Ursachi, 1968, p.22.

⁷³ Niculiță, Zanoci, Băț, 2009, p.41-43; Niculiță et alli., 2010, p.360-362; Kasuba, 2010, p.68.

⁷⁴ Kaşuba, Zanoci, 2010, p.69-72.

⁷⁵ Kaşuba, Zanoci, 2010, p.69-72.

⁷⁶ Kaşuba, Zanoci, 2010, p.69-72.

⁷⁷ László, 1972, p. 209, fig. 2.

⁷⁸ Ursachi, 1995, p. 22.

⁷⁹ Iconomu, 1996, p. 23.

⁸⁰ Vulpe,1965, p. 119.

considers the 10th century BC. the beginning of the Cozia group⁸¹. The contemporary aspect of the Cozia group to the phase II of the Corlateni group is notified due to the discovery of some decorated pottery in the settlements of Andrieșeni, Corlateni (level I), Cotu Morii, Prăjeni-Nelipești, and Trușești, in Corlateni environment⁸².

Based on findings from the Troy VIIb2, we may assume that the settlements characterized by pottery decorated by incisions have their beginning in the 11th century BC., while the lower chronological limit can be set in the 10th century BC., along with the advent of printing and of the Cozia group that is contemporary to the second phase of Babadag culture. This contemporary aspect is also established for the Granicesti group and for the phase II of the Chisinau Corlateni culture, with the upper limit being the 10th century BC., while its end may be linked to the onset of the Stoicani cemetery and Basarabia phenomenon, in southern Moldavia, in the 8th century BC.

Beginning with the 8th century BC., in the Lower Danube occurred a series of transformations regarding the funeral behaviour, which belong to large cemeteries with strict rules of rite and ritual. All these changes that occurred in the second half of the early Hallstatt, lead to a number of changes in the Carpathian Basin, and they are notified as far as west of Hungary.

The Stoicani group

Named after the eponymous cemetery, the Stoicani group represents, undoubtedly, a change in the funeral events, beginning with the 8th century BC. Hereby, it must be pointed out the appearance of separate settlements of large cemeteries with strict rules of rite and ritual, which can be found on the territory of the Babadag culture.

The inhumation represents the characteristic funeral ritual of Stoicani group, and the funeral arrangements belong to simple pits with oval or rectangular shape, carved by sterile soil at different depths, depending on the soil configuration. The pit shapes and sizes are specified only for graves 56, 57 and 58⁸³. This type of arrangement is often present in the Dniester basin, as well as in southern Basarabia, and funerary inventories consist of ceramic deposits, often accompanied by offerings.

Another cultural phenomenon identified at the eastern populations is the Mezöcsát group. It is named for the first time by E. Patek, and chronologically dated as belonging to the 9-10th centuries BC⁸⁴. This group can be found in the Hungarian Plain, and consists of about 150 graves investigated and analyzed, providing from about 20 cemeteries⁸⁵. The Mezöcsát graves are oriented WE. They appear lying on back, and, occasionally, some tombs have a crouched position. The Mezöcsát group, characterized by the rite of burial in cemeteries, with burials in which the dead are deposited right or back, we can find tombs with the skeletons lying down, left or right⁸⁶.

It is clear that the new ritual is marking a break with the old burials practiced on the Danube. Chronologically, this phenomenon occurs early in the eleventh century BC. (Tămăoani), but takes on a special intensity during the 10 and 8th centuries BC., especially in settlements attributed to the Babadag culture. It seems that the two methods used to deposit bodies (in settlements and outside settlements) is practiced parallel and on different paths. We have noticed such a case in the Saharna-Solonceni culture⁸⁷.

⁸¹ Hänsel, 1976, p. 140.

⁸² Iconomu, 1996, p.35; László, 1994, p.128-130, 158-159.

⁸³ Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Dinu, 1974, p.87-90, fig.5/1-3; Ciocca, Chicideanu, 1984, p.333.

⁸⁴ Metzner-Nebelsick, 2000, p.161.

⁸⁵ Gabler, Patek, Vörös, 1982, p.28.

⁸⁶ Metzner-Nebelsick, 2000, p.161.

⁸⁷ Ailincăi, 2008a, p.11-30; Ailincăi, 2008b, p.9-33.

Such a change in the burial ritual reflects primarily a religious concept and do not relate specifically to new population groups. Moreover, if we compare the funerals of the Carpathian Basin and the ones in the various regions in north Pontic, there are obvious differences.

In the analysis of ceramic inventory from the necropolis of Stoicani, we could identify six ceramic groups denoted by A, B, C, D, E, F. In the group A (vessels bitronconic), there are identified 9 ways of making pottery types. For group B (cups), there is only one way, while for group C (cups), there are 12 types of achievement. For groups D (bowls) and E (cup), we have identified one type of achievement, and the last group, F (vessels jar), only two ways of achieving.

Regarding the geographical distribution of ceramic types, the bitronconic vessels with globular shape are present in two specimens, with analogies that can be found in the East, specifically in the Dnieper⁸⁸ basin, and further west, in the area of Mezöcsát group - Füzesabony, namely the 44 grave in the Mezöcsát cemetery, and in the 8th grave from Ároktö-Dongóhalom⁸⁹. The cup leg is present in a single copy, in the Stoicani cemetery, and it finds analogies with four cups decorated with grooves, found in the 83rd tomb at Sopron-Várhelyi (Burgstall)⁹⁰. Part of the cemetery inventory from Stoicani is found in Babadag, phase III. So it is with three cups found in M35b, M42b and M56, having analogies with M-6 from the Stoicani cemetery from *Cotu Tichilești*⁹¹. The bowls decorated with groove technique can be found both in Babadag culture⁹² and Soldanesti group⁹³.

In my opinion, these findings (Stoicani) are a reflection of pastoral groups moved in the Eurasian space, and their way of life submits ideas and concepts seized all over the Hungarian Plain.

If what I said above is assumed to be correct, then I can say that the appearance of Stoicani cemeteries determines the end of the Babadag culture. Chronologically speaking, the group coincides with the Basarab phenomenon in the Lower Danube, specifically in the second half of the 8th century. This situation is observed in southern Transylvania and Moldavia, where most of the discoveries that we can attribute to the Basarabi phenomenon, can be chronologically included in the second half of the 8th century⁹⁴. In Wallachia, the Basarabi civilization lead to the end of the grooved ceramic horizon dated 10-11th centuries BC⁹⁵.

The Basarabi phenomenon

The time period between the 9th and the 7th centuries BC, is characterized by the spreading from the southern and south-western areas of a style with a decorative ceramic made by incision, excision and engraved prints and wearing white geometric patterns, shaded and spiral-meander. This manifestation is known as the Basarabi phenomenon, spreaded over a vast territory, and is considered to be the most representative civilization in the Carpathian-Balkan area⁹⁶.

Geographically, the phenomenon is distributed on an area comprising Vojvodina, Serbia (Morava Valley), southern Crisana, Banat, the southern part of Transylvania, the plains of southern Oltenia and Wallachia and Moldavia (for Romania), and within the middle of the

⁸⁸ Sîrbu, <http://apar.archaeology.ro/>.

⁸⁹ Gabler, Patek, Vörös, 1982, p.31-32, fig.16/4;17/2.

⁹⁰ Gabler, Patek, Vörös, 1982, p.20, fig.10/7-9,11.

⁹¹ Ailincăi, 2010, p.346-347, fig.5/5.

⁹² Jugănar, 2005, p.131, fig.37/3-4.

⁹³ Patek, 1974, pl. V/19; Kemenczei, 1981, fig. 2/5.

⁹⁴ Ursuțiu, 2002, p.73.

⁹⁵ Vulpe 2004-2005, p.22 și urm.; Palincaș, 2004-2005, p.55-64; Ailincăi, 2010, p.366.

⁹⁶ Vulpe, 2010, p.325 și urm.

Dniester basin is identified with the Soldanesti group, considered the eastern version of the Basarabi culture⁹⁷.

The archaeological research on the Basarabi phenomenon, in southern Moldavia, started in the years leading up to the Second World War, with the findings from the Poiana-Tecuci settlement⁹⁸.

Subsequently, this ceramic style is known due to the discoveries made by T. Ion Dragomir and Mihalache Brudiu, through the findings from Țigănești⁹⁹, Drăgănești¹⁰⁰, Suceava-Stoborâni¹⁰¹, Brăhășești-Bursucărie¹⁰², Piscu¹⁰³ and Ijdileni-Frumusica¹⁰⁴, to which we may add two funerary finds from Matca¹⁰⁵ and Lunca¹⁰⁶.

In Moldavia, the northern limit of the findings of this ceramic style is set by the archaeological finds identified in Dode, Vaslui county¹⁰⁷, Lipova, Vaslui¹⁰⁸ and Epureni Vaslui¹⁰⁹, while the findings from Brădicești, Iași county¹¹⁰ show that areal may change at any time.

I have compiled a catalog in which I could record 16 points where we could find pottery similar to Basarabi type. From their map distribution, we noticed that of the 16 points mapped, 9 discoveries are located in the Barlad Plateau, 2 in the Covurlui Plateau, 2 in the Tecuci Plain, and 3 in the Covurlui Plain (Map 8).

On this occasion, I could notice that, of the 16 discoveries, 7 are known due to the surface researches, followed by 6 discoveries that entered the specific literature due to preventive or survey research, and only three sites are known due to systematic research.

The distribution of the points belonging to Basarabi phenomenon shows that they have been identified on middle or upper terraces of the Siret river, Prut and Barlad. However, we observed a preference for higher areas. A specific feature of the settlements is high visibility over a larger area. Settlements of this kind are notified at Brăhășești, Dode, Glade or Suceveni-Stoborâni.

So far, in this region, only open settlements can be found. We have yet no knowledge of fortified settlement or any other item to confirm that they were built by communities of this type.

Concerning the habitation planning, it is worth mentioning the settlement from Siret-Poiana Valley, where there were investigated many complexes of Basarabi culture. Other housing complexes have been identified during the archaeological researches from Epureni¹¹¹, Suceveni-Stoborâni¹¹², Ijdileni-Frumusita¹¹³, Piscu-Cimitirul Vechi¹¹⁴, Lunca-Dealul Flamanda.

⁹⁷ Gumă, 1993, p.211; Levițki, 1994a, p.184; Kașuba, 2008, p.37; Vulpe, 2001, p.329.

⁹⁸ Vulpe, 1951, p.177,180-181, 183-184, fig.9/3;10;11/1-3;12/1-3;13/2; Vulpe, 1952, p.198, fig.9-11; Vulpe, 1965, p.132, nr.43 (nota 104); Vulpe, Teodor, 2003.

⁹⁹ Vulpe, 1986, p.66, nr. 189.

¹⁰⁰ Brudiu, 1985, p.31.

¹⁰¹ Dragomir, 1972, p.30; Dragomir, 1983, p. 87, fig. 9/2-3; 10/2-5, 7-8; Adamescu, 2011, p.377-437

¹⁰² Brudiu, 1985, p.31.

¹⁰³ Brudiu, 1991, p.233-238.

¹⁰⁴ Brudiu, 1991, p.223-233; 1997, p.143-148.

¹⁰⁵ Brudiu, 1985, p.31.

¹⁰⁶ Dragomir, 1983, p. 87, nr. 47, fig. 10/1,6. Legenda indică greșit Suceveni-Stoborâni.

¹⁰⁷ Coman, 1980, p.265; László, 1985, p.17; Vulpe, 1986, p.64

¹⁰⁸ Ursache, 2000-2001, p.297-302.

¹⁰⁹ Safta, 2001, p.130-132.

¹¹⁰ Iconomu, 1997, p.128-129; 2002, p.111.

¹¹¹ Safta, 2001, p.130-132.

¹¹² Dragomir, 1983, p. 87; Adamescu, 2011, p.378-382.

¹¹³ Brudiu, 1991, p.233-234.

¹¹⁴ Brudiu, 1991, p.233-234.

In the south of Moldavia, the excavations have identified only deepened housing, while the surface settlements are not being certified. In the settlement of Suceveni - Stoborăni was discovered a settlement documented by a number of large limestone rocks, found at Suceveni – Stoborăni, during the 1970s archaeological campaign. The recovered archaeological material is represented by a cooking pot, a fragmentary cup, a cup and two bitronconic bowls. The complex is named L3Cas.B¹¹⁵ (Pl.157/1-5). Another similar complex was discovered due to researches made by Mihalache Brudiu at Piscu – Cimitirul Vechi, in 1988¹¹⁶.

From all mentioned above and based on the documentation from other areas, we can notify a preference for the settlement steeped in surface soil compare to the surface settlement. Adrian Ursuțiu notes that during the early and the middle stages of this time period, there were mainly used deepened settlements, while, towards the end of this phenomenon the preference is using the surface housing¹¹⁷.

The pits discovered at Poiana, Suceveni-Stoborăni, Lunca Dealul-Flamanda and Piscu-Cimitirul Vechi, were used for preservation or garbage storage and they can be found in all cultural environments of the Iron Age, in the Carpathian-Danube area

So far, in southern Moldavia, there were discovered two places with findings that can be attributed to the Basarabi phenomenon. The first point was recorded in 1963, at Lunca – Rapa cu oale with the teacher Constantin Balaban, who donated pottery with human bones to the Galatzi History Museum¹¹⁸. The second point is recorded due to the research of a burial mound in which it was discovered a grave belonging to this phenomenon¹¹⁹ (Pl.167; 168/1-2).

Due to their fragmentary condition and of the small number of copies, the ceramic was subjected to a simple analysis. In the analysis we used lots comprising ceramic archaeological materials from Suceveni-Stoborăni, Poiana, Lunca and Ijdileni Frumusita. Thus, we could identify four ceramic groups denoted with A, B, C and D. In the first group A, we could identify 4 ways of achieving. The group B consists of 13 types of pottery, while the C category has only two ways of achieving. The last group consists of 3 copies which are treated differently.

The analysis of the the Basarabi decorated ceramic material allows us to admitt that the south and south west area of Romania, as well as the danubian areas from the north east of Yugoslavia and north west of Bulgaria, should be considered as the primary training area of the Basarabi phenomenon¹²⁰.

Back to the findings from southern Moldavia, I can assume that the pottery remains the sole criterion for a cultural and chronological classification, at least for the discoveries from Suceveni, Piscu, Ijdileni-Frumusita or Poiana.

The Basarabi pottery made in the south of Moldavia, can be placed, in our opinion, in the mid 8th BC, corresponding to phase II, according to the tripartite scheme proposed by Marian Guma¹²¹, or the first phase, according to the chronology made by Alexandru Vulpe¹²² and Horia Ciugudean¹²³, having analogies with other findings within the area, such as the settlements from Poiana¹²⁴, Drăgănești¹²⁵, Piscu – Cimitirul Vechi¹²⁶ and Ijdileni-Frumusita¹²⁷.

¹¹⁵ Adamescu, 2011, p.379, Fig.9/5.

¹¹⁶ Brudiu, 1991, p.233-238.

¹¹⁷ Ursuțiu, 2002, p.35-36

¹¹⁸ Dragomir, 1983, p.87.

¹¹⁹ Brudiu, 1985, p.31-36.

¹²⁰ Gumă, 1993, p.232.

¹²¹ Gumă, 1993, p.233.

¹²² Vulpe,1965, p.124.

¹²³ Ciugudean, 1997, p.157-161.

¹²⁴ Vulpe, 1986, p.86, fig. 12/1; 16/18-23.

The research of the ceramic material in southern Moldavia retains obvious similarities with the findings from the middle phase of Banat and Transylvania. In terms of ornamentation, we can notify a small number of fragments decorated with printed decoration of "S" s, "string false" or impressions, using a fine semicircular groove decoration.

Therefore, we can say that the Basarabi phenomenon can be considered the most representative ethno-cultural event for the Carpatho-Balkan area of the middle period of the Early Iron Age.

Alexandru Vulpe notes that the genesis of this phenomenon occurs in the Lower Danube, sometimes in the late 9th century BC, the most flourishing period being during the 8th century, when, in the south of Moldavia appear recessed housing settlements with Basarabi decoration.

This fact can be notify on the left bank of the Prut River and Dnieper, where it is documented the Soldanesti culture. The archaeological discoveries have shown that there is no genetic link between the type of Saharna-Solonceni findings and the type of Soldanesti, and chronologically, this event was enclosed in the 8th – 7th BC¹²⁸.

In terms of chronological development and of the relations with neighboring cultural environments, we may consider that the southern Moldavia is represented, during the late bronze age, by the Noua culture, followed by a new grooved ceramic horizon documented by the Candesti settlement, Vrancea county, and incised ceramic horizon of the Tamaoani group Tămăoani documented by the findings from Tămăoani, Foltesti and Negrileşti, which manifests itself in this region in the 11th century BC. (Ha.A2). It is assumed that the onset of the Babadag culture had occurred somewhere in the 11th century BC., but there is no element for a perfect dating. The Babadag settlements, in southern Moldavia, indicate a housing dating from the 10th- 9th centuries BC., only the Vanatori settlement may indicate an early dating, but the lack of a well-defined stratigraphic evidence does not allow us to make any statements.

At the beginning of the 8th century BC, the appearance of the Stoicani necropolis and, later on, of the Basarabi pottery led to the end of the Babadag culture.

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