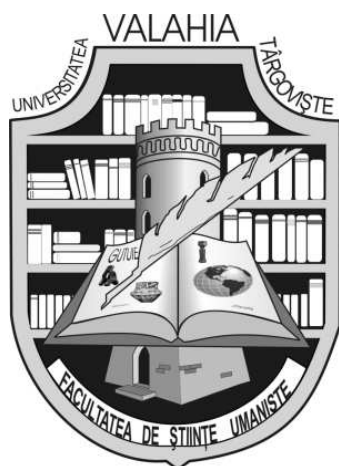


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About the Sălcuța Eneolithic culture

Cătălin Nicolae Pătroi*

*Mehedinti County Directorate for Culture, Aleea Mihai Gusita, nr. 6, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Mehedinti County, Romania. Email: tara_catalin@yahoo.com

Summary: *About the Sălcuța Eneolithic culture.* The name of the Sălcuța eneolithic communities comes from the eponymous settlement in Dolj County. The area in which it spreads comprises Oltenia, eastern Banat, north-western Bulgaria, north-eastern Serbia, similar communities also being found in Macedonia and Albania. Sălcuța culture is part of a big Eneolithic complex, along with the Krivodol (Bulgaria) and Bubanj (Serbia) groups. The best analogies for material culture elements can be found in Gumelnița culture, phase B1. Anthropomorphic plastics are well represented, along with copper tools. Sălcuța communities' evolution spans over a three phases period, their ending being determined at the level of Herculane II-III – Sălcuța IV cultures.

Key words: Sălcuța culture, Eneolithic, material culture, copper tools, anthropomorphic plastics.

Introduction

Because all stories start with "once upon a time...", our little story has a starting point that begun with a child's play in a village in Oltenia, in the first quarter of the 20th century: „I was going aimlessly, during a holiday, on plains, valleys and hills, along with cousin Marinică, until, thirsty because of all the running after antiques, we got to a stream filled with frogs, at the foot of Piscul Cornișorului”. Looking carefully at the stream, restless treasure hunters dug a hole as big as they get, and instead of "nine bags of gold coins, berried by outlaws, at the end of the gutter"-as the legend says-, they dug up lots and lots of thick pot fragments, “the kind the professor urged us to bring him”. Very happy with their find, they continued their expedition, rushing all the way up on the peak. Here, in the fresh furrows of spring ploughing, they found "a bedstone filled with ashes and potsherd" (A. Nicolae, 1996).

Our hero is none other than the great savant C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, who was a path opener throughout his entire activity in prehistoric research.

In 1916, I. Andrieșescu started systematic digging at Sălcuța, digging that were abandoned and recommenced in 1919 and 1920 (fig. 1). Unfortunately, the results of this research are only partially known as the manuscript of this monography has been lost. Under German occupation, in 1917, the German archaeologist C. Schuchardt dug at Sălcuța. The items were taken to Berlin and the results were never published (D. Berciu, 1961 b).

In 1921, I. Andrieșescu published in his work «*From Oltenia's Prehistory*» a part of the digging results, later adding two tables of Sălcuța type items in his study «*Des survivances paleolithiques dans le milieu neolithique de la Dacia*» (I. Andrieșescu, 1929). The stratigraphy revealed by the research from "Piscul Cornișorului" from Sălcuța, disclosed archaeological levels belonging to the cultures: Starčevo-Criș, Sălcuța I-III, Sălcuța IV, sporadic traces of Coțofeni, Glina III, Gârla Mare, Hallstatt and feudal remains (D. Berciu, 1961 b). Obviously, along a century of research, the approaches were different, the researchers who turned their attention towards these remains

referencing to the knowledge of their time and the extremely low repertoire of similar discoveries. A detailed presentation of the subject's historiography can be found in my study „*Repere cronologice privind cercetarea culturii Sălcuța*” (*Chronological landmarks regarding the research of Sălcuta culture*) (C. N. Pătroi, 2009 b).



Fig. 1 - Settlement on Sălcuța, Dolj County (after S. Marinescu-Bâlcu, R. R. Andreescu, 2005).

Four milestones in getting to know these pre-historical communities from Oltenia must be mentioned:

First milestone - D. Berciu publishes in 1939 “*Arheologia preistorică a Olteniei*” (*Oltenia's Prehistoric Archaeology*). It is presented as a first repertoire of settlements and discoveries attributed to the Sălcuța culture in: Hinova, Cloșani, Salcia, Vela, Cornu, Maglavit, Terpezița, Coțofeni, Corabia, Frăsinet de Pădure, Orlea, Celei, Severin “Castrul Drobeta” and the west of the city.

Fact – As a statement, D. Berciu (1939) said: “the Sălcuța settlement's name is linked to the beginning of our systematic archaeological movement, not only in Oltenia, but also across the country”

Second milestone – The detailed presentation by D. Berciu, in 1961 in the volume “*Contribuții la problemele neoliticului în România în lumina noilor cercetări*” (*Contributions to the neolithic's problems in Romania, in light of new researches*) of the results of systematic researches from the campaigns of 1950-1951. The periodization of the Sălcuța culture evolution is postulated, during four fazes – Sălcuța I, Sălcuța II (with the subdivisions II a, II b and II c), Sălcuța III and Sălcuța IV and synchronism with cultural phenomenons from neighbouring geographical

areas are made (the relation with the Gumelnița Eneolithic culture and the appartenance of the Sălcuța culture to a greater Eneolithic cultural complex along with south Danube groups Bubanj–north– eastern Serbia and Krivodol–north-western Bulgaria) (fig. 2).

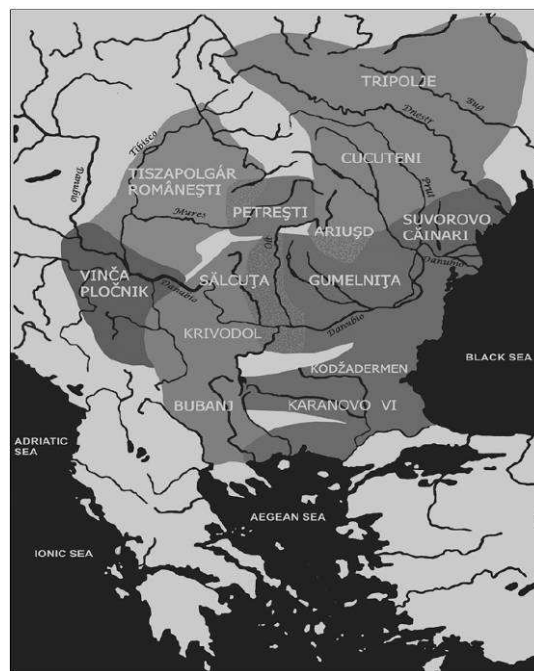


Fig. 2 - Eneolithic cultures distribution map from Southeastern Europe (after Lazarovici *et al.* 2009).

Fact

1. Items characteristic to Sălcuța culture, discovered through research campaigns are similar in shape and design with the discoveries from the Gumelnița culture, but the author puts this on account of imports and not on a evolution of a common cultural base. To strengthen this point of view (D. Berciu, 1961 a) makes parallels at a relative chronological level that the evolutionary phases of the Sălcuța culture are synchronised with those of the Gumelnița culture.

2. The evolutionary phase Sălcuța IV is seen as the last evolutionary stage of the Sălcuța culture; although the discovered items (ceramics with handles, milk pots, the vessel with “draining tube”; the impressions, the motif of the spiral) show that this is a new cultural phenomenon.

Following the researches at Băile Herculane “Peștera Hoților” which revealed this cultural delimitation more clearly, P. Roman (1971) postulated at a relative chronology level, in the

study “*Strukturänderungen des Endaneolithikums im Donau-Karpaten Raum*”, the new realities, which are subsequently supported by similar discoveries in Bistreț, Valea Anilor, Slatina-Timiș etc. and which are attributed to a more recent cultural horizon named Sălcuța IV-Herculane II-III (I. Sălceanu, 2008).

3. Based on stratigraphic observations from Reșca (Olt County) from a tell with defense ditch and vallum attributed to the Sălcuța culture, where a Jaszladany copper ax was found in a Sălcuța III level, corroborated with the presence of Cernavodă I elements in the classical Sălcuța settlements, the absence of Jaszladany axes from Gumelnița settlements and the discovery of a great number of axes in the Sălcuța culture area, the appearance of Brătești type complexes, the discovery of a Bodrogkeresztur graveyard over a Sălcuța settlement, the chronological gap between the Sălcuța and Gumelnița culture can be observed (P. Roman, 1978) and that is: the classical fazes of the Sălcuța culture are subsequent to the Gumelnița cultural evolution.

Third milestone – The rescue researches from the eneolithic graveyard from Ostrovul Corbului, Mehedinți County (P. Roman, 1996; P. Roman, A. D. Oprițescu, 1989; 1998) and from the settlement Sălcuța (M. Șimon, 1989). Diggings were grouped in two sectors: A and B. The main sector was named A and it was found on “Botul Cliuciului” between km. Flv. 910,880 and km. flv. 911,018. This was explored through 20 sections made on the beach at km. Flv. 911 where 64 inhumation graves were found: three-Schela Cladovei, five-Criș culture, 53 Eneolithic and three-Hallstatt. In 1984, the graveyard was destroyed by the Danube and covered by the reservoir of the Porțile de Fier II hydro power plant.

Fact

1. The cemetery is reflecting the contacts with ethno-cultural groups which have met in south-western Romania; the synthesis resulted from their interconnection had as a base the Sălcuța cultural background. The following Eneolithic cultures: Sălcuța, Cernavoda I and Bodrogkeresztur, reached at this moment of their evolution the transition stage towards Sălcuța IV-Herculane II-III.

2. The three layers of the Sălcuța habitation from the settlement form two distinct stages.

The first two layers form a first stage and the third one a second stage, strongly linked with the first. The best analogies for the artefacts discovered are in the Sălcuța III phase from “Piscul Cornișorului”. So, we have:

-Sălcuța III a – layer corresponding to the third phase from Sălcuța (characterised through smashed shells).

- Sălcuța III b – represented by the first and the second layers from Ostrovul Corbului (smashed shells and the appearance of the alveolated decoration).

- Sălcuța III c – represented by the third layer from Ostrovul Corbului (increases the temper with shells, the impressed decoration is generalizing).

There is postulated the chronological parallelism between Sălcuța III a – III c - Cernavoda I - Brătești.

Fourth milestone – Sistematic research at the Eneolithic site of Drăgănești-Olt “Corboaica” (M. Nica, 1990; M. Butoi, T. Zorzoliu, 1992; M. Nica, 1994; M. Nica et al., 1995; M. Nica, C. Fântâneau, 2000; A. Grosu, 2004; G. El Susi, 2006). The tell settlement is surrounded by a wall and a ditch and has a cultural layer 2.85 m thick in the center of the settlement and 2 m thick behind the wall. The height of the wall is 1.30 m.

Fact – Based on the stratigraphic relations from the sections III and IV and taking into account the groups of floors from surface houses, the Eneolithic layer from this tell was formed during three phases.

-the first phase: Gumelnița A 2 (- 2,90 and – 2 m).

- the second phase: Gumelnița B1 (- 2 and – 1m). At this moment appear the first Sălcuța elements together with type C pottery.

- the third phase: the upper layer with a thickness of 0.80 m. There are features from the last phase of the Sălcuța culture.

New elements which permitted the resuming of the debates about the Sălcuța culture:

-Adriana Radu (2002) published her Ph.D thesis, “*The Sălcuța culture in the Banat*” referring to the research, interpretation and valuation of the artefacts from settlements belonging to the phases II b, IIc and III of the Sălcuța culture from the Banat. The repertoire of settlements and discoveries contains 14 positions of which only Băile Herculane “Peștera Hoților”

Cuptoare “Sfogeia” and Slatina- Timiș benefited of a systematic research and consistent stratigraphy. Also, there were highlighted the contacts between the Sălcuța culture with Neolithic elements of Vinča or Tiszapolgar type that have a consistent presence in the Banat and in the western part of Romania.

-The publication of archaeological materials from H. Dumitrescu’s excavations at Sălcuța in 1946–1947 (S. Marinescu-Bâlcu, R. R. Andreescu, 2005).

-As Sălcuța IV was defined in the archaeological literature as a distinct culture, many problems regarding the end of the Sălcuța culture and what comes after are presented in the book “*Sălcuța IV – Herculan II – III*” (I. Sălceanu, 2008).

-The valuation of the archaeological material from habitation layers attributed to the Sălcuța culture from Verbicioara, Dolj County (D. Berciu, 1950; E. Comșa *et al*, 1951; 1952; E. C. Ștefan, 2011 a, b; 2012).

The settlements and discoveries attributed to the Sălcuța culture

The repertoire of settlements and discoveries attributed to the Sălcuța culture comprises a significant number of sites (C. N. Pătroi, 2007; 2011) from the entire area of Sălcuța culture’s evolution and topographically situated on all kinds of landforms. The most simple approach, using as a criterion the easiest access to water resources, offers a wide range of locations where Sălcuța communities lived: on the bank of the Danube, on the grids and islets, or in the inland area, along the main rivers and streams of Oltenia. The situation is as following:

- on the bank of the Danube: the settlements from Balta Verde, Gârla Mare, Șvinita, Țigănași (Mehedinți County).

- Danube’s islets–Ostrovul Corbului, Ostrovu Mare, Ostrovu Șimian (Mehedinți County).

- on low altitude areas along inland rivers and brooks: the sites of Almăjel, Corlățel (Mehedinți), Valea Anilor (Mehedinți) – on the Drincea’s bank; the tell of Brebeni (Olt) on the Oboga valley; the tell of Optași (Olt County) at the confluence between Vedița and Veza; the tell of Drăgănești-Olt “Corboaica” on the bank of the Sâi stream, the settlement of Vâlcelele “Dealul Cișmelelor” (Olt County) on the Iminog’s bank and more other sites.

- on inland rivers and brooks, but placed at low altitude, in strategic locations: the site of Curmătura (Dolj County) on a terrace promontory in the waterside of the Desnățui, the eponymous tell settlement from Sălcuța “Piscul Cornișorului” on the spur of a hill close to Desnățui brook; the site of Slatina “Strehareț” on a high area close to the Sopot stream, etc.

Without any doubt, the access to water sources was combined with the strategic criterion, many settlements or temporary habitations being reported from hills such those from Dobra (Mehedinți County), Coțofenii din Dos – on the “Botul Mare” Hill (Dolj County), Găneasa (Olt County) – a settlement on a high plateau, easy to defence, flanked by the Corneș brook.

Some settlements have ditch and defending wall: Sălcuța, Drăgănești-Olt, Brebeni, Reșca, Vădastra.

Habitations in caves are attested from the final phase, Sălcuța III, especially in the Banat area (A. Radu, 2002): Hoților Cave, Cave from Piatra Băniței, Gaura Ungurului Cave, Dubova Cave, Rolului Cave, Cave from Colțul Cătării, Gaura Porcariului Cave, Mare Cave from Găuri, Mare Cave beside Colțul Tulburării at Domașnea and also Baia de Fier “Peștera Muierilor” (Gorj County). For the synchronous group Krivodol, from Bulgaria, we mentions Devetaki Cave (D. Berciu, 1962), researched by V. Mikov și N. Djambazov in 1960. The Devetaki III layer belongs to the cultural horizon Sălcuța – Krivodol.

Dwelling structures. Archaeological features utilized by the members of the community

By analyzing the profiles and the results of surface excavations at some Sălcuța sites it can be observed an evolution from pit houses to surface houses, built from posts and wattle, stuck with clay mixed with organic materials and sand, and with roofs made of straw or reed. This problem was analysed in detail in my work *Dwelling structures in the Late Eneolithic of Oltenia* (C. N. Pătroi, 2008) where I presented the types of dwellings discovered for each phase of the Sălcuța culture. The main sources of information were based on data obtained from the sites of Sălcuța “Piscul Cornișorului” (D., Berciu, 1961 b; S. M. Bâlcu, R. R., Andreescu, 2005), Șimnic, Cerăt (D. Galbenu, 1969), Drăgănești-Olt “Corboaica” (M. Butoi, T.

Zorzoliu, 1992; M. Nica *et al.*, 1995), Ostrovul Corbului (M. Șimon, 1989), Ostrovu Șimian (E. Comșa, 1990), Ostrovu Mare (G. Crăciunescu, 1985), Almăjel (D. Galbenu, 1983), Balta Verde (D. Berciu, E. Comșa, 1956), Gârla Mare “Malu Mare”, Mehedinți County (E. Comșa, 1990), and Băile Herculane-“Peștera Hoților” (P. Roman, 1967), Cuptoare “Sfogeia”, Caraș-Severin County (A. Radu, 1993) and Slatina-Timiș “Săș” (Gh. Lazarovici, 1982).

Recent joined in the scientific circuit the material resulted from the researches in the site of Verbicioara (Dolj County) from 1951, the author presenting a residential complex of Sălcuța III (E. C. Ștefan, 2011b). It can make a number of observations about the houses from Sălcuța (fig. 3-4).

- It captured the evolution from huts to residential structures having round or oval form and from small dimensions to large housing having a rectangular irregular form. Are attested two forms of houses: one room houses and two room's houses with an entrance at the north side or at south side (site from Sălcuța III).

- The walls were made from trellis. Between poles stuck in the ground they added a braided composed by small stuck without being placed in the ground (Sălcuța III). Either the walls were placed in to a small ditch such as Almăjel (Mehedinți County).

- The direction of housing location in the settlements are the most various, north-east at Sălcuța, north-south at Drăgănești-Olt, south-north or north-south at Ostrovul Corbului (Mehedinți County). We can talk about a clear criterion of location of structures in the settlements assigned in the Sălcuța culture as we have for the area of Cucuteni culture, Gumelnița or Karanovo VI and Varna from Bulgaria. We notice however a preference for the location on the axe north south, probably due to the topography of the land and the direction of the wind is determining housing orientation.

- At Cuptoare “Sfogeia” the house S2 bring in the foreground for the Sălcuța areal using a platform of small stones blended with adobe, this thing being possible because the community lived near the stone resources area.

- As a measure of protection against flood, there were placed around ditches for water drainage as in the case of Sălcuța phase II c and Drăgănești-Olt.

- An ovens complex was found at Curmătura,

Olt County (M. Nica, C. Câșlaru, 1981). We speak here about six structures having a horseshoe form and being placed by air currents.

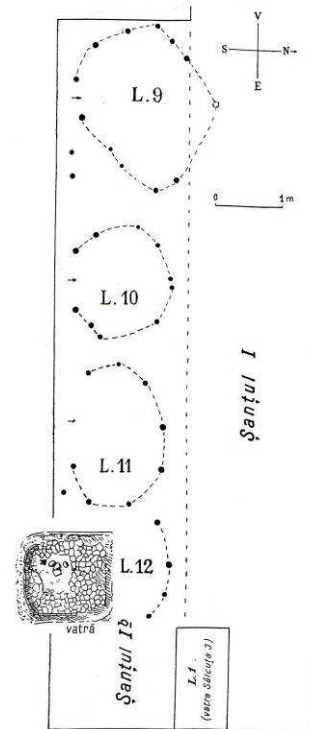


Fig. 3 - House L9-L12 on Sălcuța, Dolj County (after D. Berciu, 1961 b).

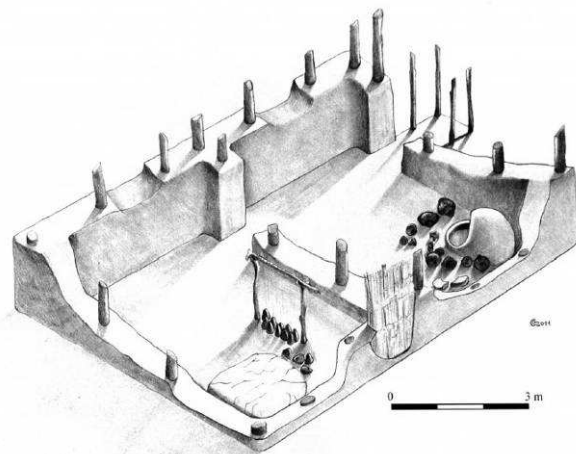


Fig. 4 - House reconstructed from Verbicioara site, Dolj County (after E. C. Ștefan, 2011).

From the point of view of archaeological interiors complex the situation is as follows:

- hearth with groove (*gardina*) that after his disrepair it has been enlarged and has been added a vault oven (east wall location)-site of Almăjel,

evolutive phase II;

- hearth placed in the north-west corner and build it to a pedestal of clay (Drăgănești-Olt, phase II);
- simple hearth having an oval form and being placed at the south side which had as his right an ash pit and at his left a clay pedestal for weights (Sălcuța phase III);
- two hearts, one simple and the other garden heart in the same room (Ostrovul Corbului phase III);
- clay bed covered with a petrified doormat placed on the south wall (Almăjel phase II, Drăgănești-Olt phase III);
- a hole for kitchen supplies in oval form that goes down in stairs placed on the north wall (Ostrovul Corbului phase III).

Ritual deposits located at the basis of house III, facts illustrated in some discoveries from Ostrovul Corbului and the skeleton of a child in an oven from Curmătura complete the image.

We cannot speak yet about a model of Sălcuța houses identified just in this area. The closest analogy's are at cultural complex level (Gumelnița, Karanovo VI for the group Kridovol from Bulgaria we have various situations. At Krivelj and Kridovol (V. Mikov, 1948) were founded small houses with small dimensions (3/4m) placed on the terrace of a scarp and in the case of the first sit an house is placed on a rock and a part of this being used as a protection wall. There are similarities at Supljevec or Velik Humsk Cuka (****, 1979).

Graves. Cemeteries. Isolated discoveries of bones.

The findings are quite a few and they came from the sites Gârlești-Ghecerești, Dolj County (M. Nica, 1983), Ostrovul Corbului (P. Roman, A. D Opritescu, 2008) with the points "Botul Piscului" and "Botul Cluciului", Mehedinti County, from the few graves discovered in the Gumelnița-Sălcuța settlements from Drăgănești-Olt, Olt County (M. Nica *et al.*, 1995) as from a child grave discovered in a bread oven from Curmătura, Dolj County (M. Nica, C. Câșlaru, 1981) and another of a woman in Lepenski Vir (L. Zagorka, 1970).

The majority of graves from Gârlești (M. Nica, 1983), in number of ten, were having the skeletons in a crouching position and they were north/ north-west/ south/ south – east oriented. Only three crouching graves of children (M 8, 9, 10) had the skeletons right recumbent with the

head oriented to south east. The funerary inventory is poor and the few ceramic fragments Sălcuța type discovered in the south corner of section III in the peripheral zone of the necropolis, allows framing the necropolis in the phase III of Sălcuța culture.

The right snuggle position of the four skeletons from Gârlești necropolis is found in a very low frequency at the gumelnițean graves from Vidra, Cernavoda, Grădiștea Ulmilor, Dridu, Kubrat and Russe. The same observation can be made when it is about the folded arms position, which in the majority of cases, both tombs from Gârlești or Gumelnița, are touching the face and chin with palms.

In the neo-eneolithic settlement from Drăgănești-Olt, Olt County (M. Nica, 1995), "Corboaica" point, there were identified six graves belonging to Sălcuța culture M4-M9 (fig. 5). There are the graves of some adults in oval hole whose skeletons crouched to left and being oriented to east west. The funerary inventory is present distinguishing out a Vidra type axe, snail shells and the rest of an animal offering.

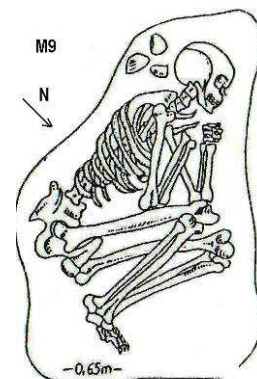


Fig. 5 - Grave M9 from settlement at Drăgănești - Olt "Corboaica" (after Nica *et al.*, 1995).

The anthropology analysis (A. Comșa, 1995) to an individual human being from M4 illustrated the robustness at the entire skeleton level and well muscled. The sex is male, aged 40-45 years old and the type is protoeuropoid with northern influences. The highest affinities are at tumulus graves with red ochre populations. We cannot speak about an allogenic, since the anthropological type is very present in the Romanian space at Neolithic level.

In oven number one from Curmătura, Dolj County (M. Nica, C. Câșlaru, 198) under a 0,22 m higher vault, on the west edge of the hearth,

was discovered the skeleton of a child. This was submitted faced down on a thin layer of ash. To have enough places in the oven, the child was pushed to the western wall with the hands glued to his body and feet tightened (fig. 6). Overhead it could be observed a libation hole which was perforating the vault of the oven. Near his head, oriented to the right, were deposited as an offering two pieces of ox meat and five snails discovered behind the skeleton. The age of the child was estimated between four and five years old by the anthropologist Dardu Nicolăescu-Plopsor (1974).

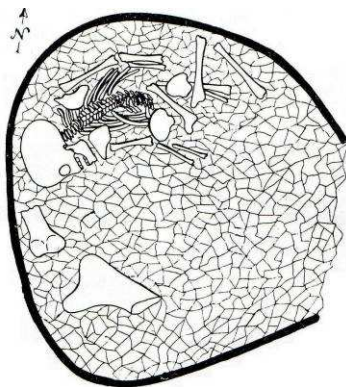


Fig. 6 - Child's grave in oven number one from Curmătura, Dolj County (After M. Nica, C. Câșlaru, 1981).

An isolated grave assigned to Sălcuța culture was discovered to Lepenski – Vir. The skeleton belongs to a woman between 40-50 years old with a height of 1,54 - 1,65m. Its position was south north and the crane being oriented to south. The skeleton was faced down on the abdomen, with the lower limbs brought back and the crane facing the ground. The grave is rich in funerary materials and includes four clay pots.

Crouched graves with the dead placed on the left side, with small deviation guidance, were discovered near the sălcuța settlements from Ostrovul Corbului, Mehedinți County, to “Botul Cluciului” and “Botul Piscului” points (fig. 7).

Undoubtedly, the Eneolithic cemetery from Ostrovul Corbului (P. Roman, 1996) is one of the most spectacular discovery on Romania's territory and portrays a phenomenon of local culture synthesis which reflects a predefined symbiosis of earlier ethno-cultural contacts, which, according to the inventory, were located in the Sălcuța-Tiszapolgar-Cernavoda I.

Technical details on the Ostrovul Corbului grave pits are given by Ann Dodd Opreșcu (P. Roman, A. D. Opreșcu, 2008). Most graves are east-to-west oriented, head facing east and feet to the west with a slight deviation to east/north/east-west/south/west. The most obvious analogies can be detected in Bodrogkeresztur culture and also in Tiszavalk, Magyarhomorog, Tiszapolgar, Basatanya, Jászládány cemeteries.

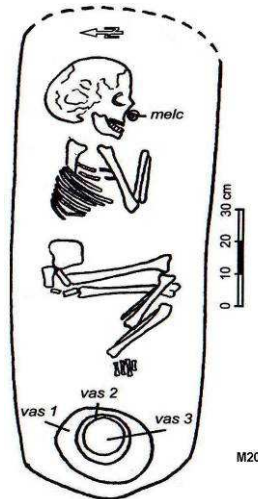


Fig. 7 - Grave M20 from cemetery at Ostrovul Corbului, Mehedinți County (after P. Roman, A. D. Opreșcu, 2008).

Funerary inventory is poor, consisting mostly of ceramics, but also tools, weapons, ornaments and flesh offerings. No pattern could be established in the arrangement of offerings along the pit. However, the most common situation seems to coincide with the location of a ceramic vessel near the head. Bowls and straight-edged and tapered body dishes were the most common items discovered in this cemetery. The main components of the funeral inventory from Ostrovul Corbului have their origin or derivation to Sălcuța. It is not surprising at all, given the fact that the area was densely inhabited by these communities.

As to the distorted position of legs, in most cases, for instance Ghercești, Ostrovul Corbului, Drăgănești-Olt and so on, the femurs and the spine are arranged as to form a right angle (C. N. Pătroi, 2010).

In addition to these elements, practices which cannot be classified as funerary were also attested in the Sălcuța area, such as human bones occasionally discovered in domestically contexts.

There are two certified cases for the Sălcuța communities: the first one, located in the eponymous settlement, where a mandible belonging to a 40-45 years old male was found (E. Comșa, 1974) and the second case in Băile Herculane – “Peștera Hoților” (D. N. Plopșor, 1974) where a skull with no mandible and a human sacrum in association with a humerus of *Bos taurus* and a Sălcuța vessel from the late age were found.

Recent researches carried out in the southern end of Lîga village (K. Randsborg *et al.*, 2005) in Bulgaria revealed seven tombs attributed to the Krivodol group. All tombs were discovered in the southern or south - western part of the Lîga hill. Women were buried separately and children were placed along with adult males. This division by gender was also observed in a cemetery from the Eneolithic period at Târgoviște (Bulgaria), where 11 graves were found out of which four were attributed to men and another four to women. The graves were placed separately.

Funerals in the Krivodol culture area remain scarce, this feature also being applicable to Thrace, where abound the settlements with tell. In north-western Bulgaria, tombs associated with remains from the Eneolithic were found in Devetaki Cave. The excavations from 1952 revealed four children's graves dating from Eneolithic age. Deceased were placed in an extremely crooked position, knees brought to the chest.

Information on funerary findings from Sălcuța can be discussed and compared to the new findings from Sultana – “Malul Roșu” (C. Lazăr *et al.*, 2009) in Gumelnița as well. The inhumation graves are oriented towards east and the deceased are placed in distorted positions left or right oriented. The cemetery is approximately 150 m to the west of the tell. Gumelnița communities from Pietrele “Gorgana” point, Giurgiu County (M. Toderaș *et al.*, 2009), seem to prefer the same location.

Elements of material culture

As the sites attributed to Sălcuța culture came to the attention of specialists, extensive research was triggered. Most materials, now part of the movable cultural heritage, were discovered as a result of systematic research.

At the moment, the results of the excavations from the eponym settlement in Sălcuța “Piscul Cornișorului” are the most important both in

terms of materials and in terms of quality of records and stratigraphy. In order to offer an accurate picture, it would be ideal to refer only to the materials found in supervised stratigraphic compounds, but this approach is toilsome precisely due to inaccurate information that we have received from authors. Inventory items attributed to Sălcuța culture can also be traced back to the settlement and cemetery at Ostrovul Corbului, Ostrovu Șimian, Valea Anilor, Almăjel (Mehedinți County), settlements in Șimnic, Cerăt, the eneolithic kilns from Curmătura, cemetery and settlement at Gârlești-Ghercești, “La trestii” Verbicioara (Dolj County), Vădastra “La Cișmele” and “Măgura Fetelor”, Drăgănești-Olt “Corboaica”, Brebeni, Slatina “Strehareț” (Olt County), Băile Herculane “Peștera Hoților” Cuptoare “Sfogeia” (Caraș-Severin County) and Slatina-Timiș “Săș” (Timiș County).

Flint tools (D. Berciu, 1939; 1961 b; Al. Păunescu, 1970; D. Galbenu, 1975; I. Stângă, 1982; M. Șimon, 1989; M. Nica *et al.*, 1995; E. C. Ștefan, 2012) are represented by: retouched blades, finely denticulated blades, sickle elements on small and medium-size truncated blades, notched blades, truncated blades (transversal, convexly, flattened, concavely truncation), perforators on blade, endscrapers on blade and flake, the majority with convex active part, but also oblique, straight and convex-carenated. Some endscrapers, usually made on blades, present finely retouched and denticulate edges; there are also endscrapers-drill tools, arrowheads and spearheads triangularly shaped and usually with straight basis, slightly convex or concave; flint axes. Were analyzed the lithic materials from the sites Sălcuța, Verbicioara (fig. 8), Șimnic (Dolj County), Vădastra, Drăgănești – Olt (Olt County), Ostrovul Corbului, Almăjel (Mehedinți County), Orlea (“Grindul lui Ianacu Mușat”, Olt County), Băile Herculane “Peștera Hoților” and Cuptoare “Sfogeia” Caraș-Severin County (P. Roman, 1967; 1971; A. Radu, 2002).

Apparently, the eneolithic inventory inherent to the cultural compound Sălcuța-Krivodo-Bubanj has a unitary character. Thus, according to evidence in the Devetaka cave, flint tools and weapons of the Krivodol group present striking similarities to those of the settlements in Sălcuța. Most types of flint tools found in Sălcuța settlements are common to almost every contemporary and contiguous cultural area. It seems that so far, there is no type of flint tool

specific to Sălcuța culture only.

Stone axes (D. Berciu, 1939; 1961 b, D. Galbenu, 1983; Gh. Lazarovici, 1979; M. Nica, T. Zorzoliu, 1992; M. Nica et al., 1995; S. M. Bîlcu, R. R. Andreescu, 2005) are made of sandstone (sites of Cuptoare “Sfocea” and Sălcuța) and rarely of a more nonlocal hard stones, such as quartz found in the upper area of the Jiu river or diabase. There were found: block-shaped hand axes (fragment), hammer axes with a transversal hafting cavity, unperforated axes of

different shapes and sizes (V. Cristescu, 1932), Vădastra site, “Măgura Fetelor” and a special category of shield-shaped axes (D. Berciu, 1939). **Grinders** (D. Berciu, 1961; D. Galbenu, 1983) are represented by: plain-convex grinders, with the lower stone fixed on a ground base/pedestal or directly in sand, curved or irregularly shaped; portable (mobile) grinders, with small dimensions, with two flat surfaces, were generally used on both sides. The grinders’ shape is quite varied due to the nature of the rock of

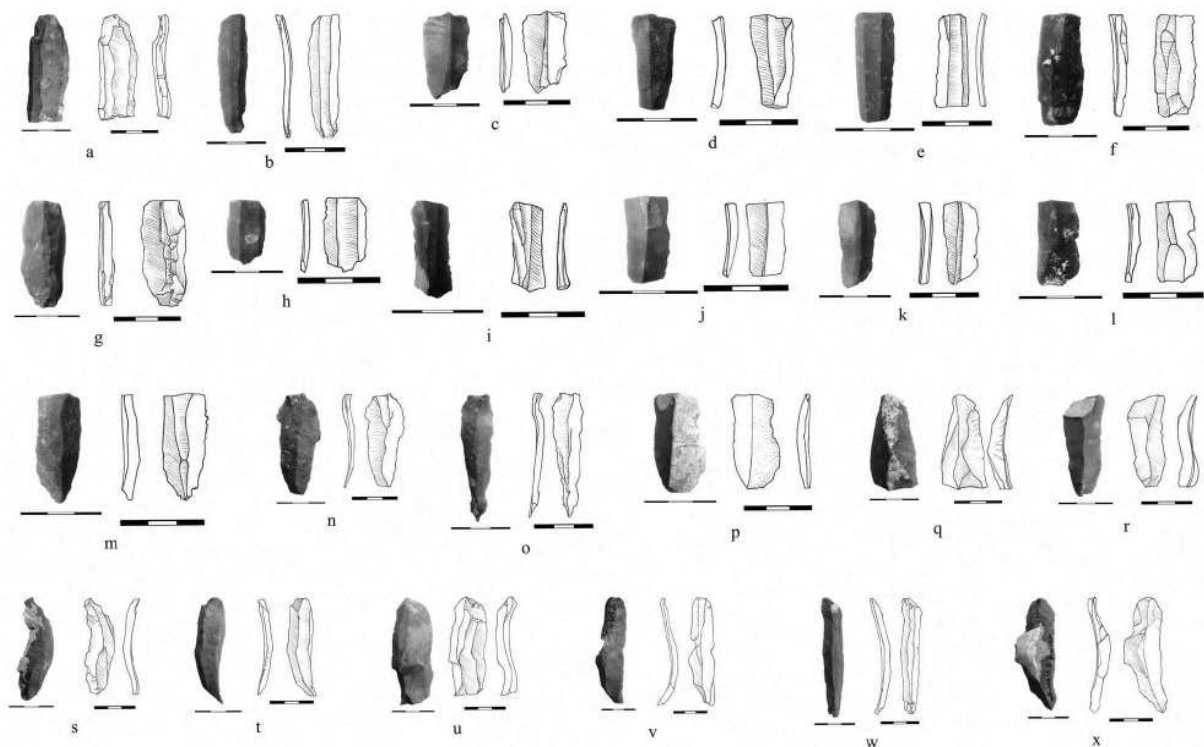


Fig. 8 - Flint tools discovered at Verbicioara, Dolj County (after E. C. Ștefan 2012).

which they were made: trapezoidal shape with irregular edges; oblong shape with flat top and curved bottom; cone/funnel shape almost flat; nearly round shape, with flat inner surface; rectangular shape with the corners made by hitting and tiny hammering; triangular shape.

Grinding stones and hammers. The most common form is cylindrical (D. Berciu, 1961 b). The pieces from Sălcuța, Șimnic and Drăgănești-Olt are similar. Hammers are rare and were made from quartzite, rarely from flint.

Chisels. There are two artefacts from Sălcuța phase II (fig. 9), from Almăjel, and from phase III we have only one piece (D. Galbenu, 1983). Another two pieces are from Drăgănești-Olt

and have a flat form (M. Nica, T. Zorzoliu, 1992).

Bone-antler objects, although they are much likely to an easier degradation due to the material and the environment in which they were found, are also present in the settlements of Sălcuța communities (fig. 10). Are remarkable the antler mattocks discovered in the sites from Almăjel (D. Galbenu, 1983), Drăgănești-Olt (M. Butoi, T. Zorzoliu, 1992), Sălcuța (D. Berciu, 1961b), Verbicioara (D. Berciu, E. Comșa, 1957) and Ostrovul Corbului (M. Șimon, 1989). The only way to differentiate the mattocks is the hafting-hole, which had a round or rectangular section. The rectangular shape section is characteristic to the phase I of the culture. With the phase II of

Sălcuța culture, this form is no longer used.

-chisels: discovered in large number in Sălcuța, Almăjel and Drăgănești -Olt.

-awl: discovered in all phases of Sălcuța culture, with the single mention that towards the end of this culture's evolution their number decreases (D. Berciu, 1961 b).

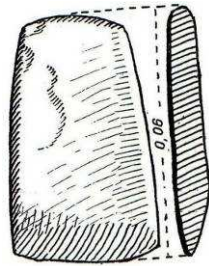


Fig. 9 - Chisels discovered at Sălcuța, Dolj County (after D. Berciu, 1961 b).

-sheaths and handles, perforators, dibbles/planters, daggers are poorly represented—Sălcuța, Cuptoare—“Sfogea” (G. Trancă, 1981), Almăjel (D. Galbenu, 1983).

-spatulas: Ostrovul Corbului settlement (M. Șimon, 1989) and the eponymous settlement.

-fishing hooks: Verbicioara (D. Berciu, E. Comșa, 1957), Sălcuța (D. Berciu, 1961 b) și Căzănești “Fabrica”, Vâlcea County (Gh. P. Govora, 1995).

-spindle whorls: appeared during Sălcuța III phase from Drăgănești-Olt “Corboaica”.

-polishers: two pieces from Sălcuța made of astragalus/talus/ankle bone.

The tools inventory contains also **clay objects**. The most numerous are the loom weights, tapered, with two flat sides and rounded edges—Sălcuța (D. Berciu, 1961 b), Ostrovul Corbului (M. Șimon, 1989); pyramid-shaped—Sălcuța (D. Berciu, 1961 b), Ostrovul Mare (G. Crăciunescu, 1985), Valea Anilor (Mehedinți); “saddle”-shaped loom weights discovered in Almăjel (D. Galbenu, 1983) and Drăgănești—Olt (M. Nica, 1994) and assigned to Sălcuța phase III.

Distaffs (D. Berciu, 1961 b; M. Butoi, T. Zorzioliu, 1992; D. Galbenu, 1983), **spools**, **stamp seals** (S. M. Bîlcu, R. R. Andreescu, 2005) are very rarely.

Metal objects (C. N. Pătroi, 2006 a) are numerous, Sălcuța communities using different types of copper tools, from the simplest-small objects such as awls, fishing hooks, to the most complex- chisels, flat axes, pickaxes. Ornaments

were discovered as well, like hairpins of various types - with volute (Vădastra— “Măgura Fetelor” and Drăgănești-Olt “Corboaica” sites), with square section (D. Berciu *et al.*, 1951; M. Șimon, 1989), with round section (M. Nica, 1990; M. Nica *et al.*, 1995), with rhombic plate head (M. Nica *et al.*, 1995), rings (V. Cristescu, 1927-1932), small copper beads (C. N. Mateescu, 1959) and even a razor blade (fig. 11).



Fig. 10 - Bone tools discovered at Sălcuța, Dolj County (after D. Berciu, 1961 b).

Axes with arms in cross of **Jaszladany** type, Târnăvița, Orșova, Petrești and Bradu variants, are found in large numbers in the area of Sălcuța culture, not in stratigraphic conditions, but isolated (fig. 12-13). Such objects are found in Rast settlement, Dolj County (C. Nicolăescu-Plopșor *et al.*, 1951), Sălcuța, Dolj County (D. Berciu, S. Morintz, 1952; D. Berciu, 1961 b), Cerăt, Dolj County (D. Galbenu, 1969), Reșca, Olt County, Coșovenii de Jos, Dolj County (C. Moisil, 1911; E. Comșa, 1981), Padina Mare, Mehedinți County (O. Toropu, 1965; I. Mareș, 2002), Poiana, Mehedinți County (E. Tudor, 1972; I. Mareș, 2002), Vârtop, Dolj County, Halânga, Mehedinți County (Al. Vulpe, 1975), Dobriceni, Vâlcea County (A. Dumitrașcu, Gh. Manea, 1978), Izverna, Mehedinți County (D. Tudor, 1934; E. Comșa, 1981), Dubova “Poiana din Zbag”, Mehedinți County, Obogeni (Gh. P. Govora, 1995), Prudeni (Gh. P. Govora, 1983; I. Mareș, 2002), Govora village, Vâlcea County (Gh. P. Govora, 1983), Racovița, Vâlcea County (Gh. P. Govora, 1983; I. Mareș, 2002), Drobeta Turnu Severin (C. Manea, 2006), Vlcele, Olt County (Al. Vulpe, 1975). Only the piece from Reșca, Olt County (Al. Vulpe, 1975; I. Mareș, 2002), which was found at the base of the

defensive mound from Sălcuța phase III, is from a certain chronological context.

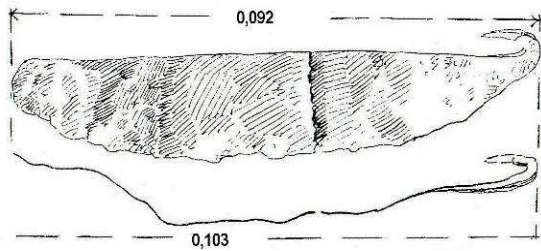


Fig. 11 - Copper tools (After D. Berciu, 1939).

Techniques: hot and cold hammering, reducing the ore then casting it in monovalve or bivalve moulds using the “lost-wax” process.

Local sources of ore: the most likely areas to exploit copper veins are Baia de Aramă and Baia de Fier, analyzes of copper pieces from the Sălcuța cultural area confirming that there were used two types of ore: one with traces of silver, sometimes silver and iron, and the second with insignificant traces of nickel (E. Comșa, 1981).

Copper ore is found in abundance in these areas and some extracting points may have their roots to the Eneolithic period. These are:

a) The smithies from Valea Găinii, in which the metal was extracted from Joița mines and the surroundings.

b) The smithies from Zahana, in which the metal was extracted from Ocnele/mines in Cornetul Băii.

c) The smithies from Baroaia which served to extract ore from Ocnele/mines in Baroaia.

d) The smithies from the place called “Valea Cușnițelor”.

e) The smithies from Dealul Tihomirului, whose vents still exist today in Poiana Timohirului near Groapa Lupului, between the boundaries of the villages Văeni, Sohodol and Padeș (N. D. Spineanu, 1994).

Another source of raw material (D. Diaconescu, 2009), close enough to the Sălcuța communities is Banat region. Important copper resources are reported in Rușchița, Bucova, Tincova, Ocna de Fier, Docnecea, Teregova, Ciclova-Romană- Oravița Măidan, Sasca Montană, Moldova Nouă, Topleț and Valea Cernei-Banat Mountains, Podeni, Plavișevita (Mehedinți County).

Analysis. For Oltenia area of evolution, analyses were made on copper objects found at

Sălcuța and Verbicioara. Copper appears in combination with traces of Ag, Ni, Fe and sometimes a small percentage of Mn, Zn, Pb. (D. Berciu, 1961 b; S. Junghans *et al.*, 1968).

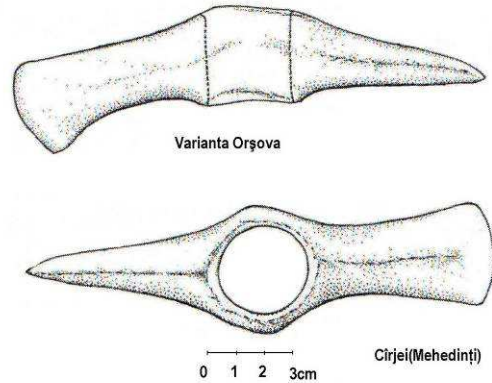


Fig.12 - Axes of “Jaszladany” type at Cîrjei, Mehedinți County (after C. Manea, 2006).



Fig. 13 - Axes of “Jaszladany” type at Moșăței, Dolj County. Photo C. N. Pătroi.

Analysis of a copper chisel-ax from Cuptoare “Sfogeia” (Caraș-Severin county), from Sălcuța phase III reveals the following:

- metal’s purity is less than 0.005%.
- impurities present in copper are: Au, As, Sb, Se, Hg, Ni, Sc, Fe, Zn, Co, Tn, Sn and lead to a

slight increase in strength and hardness of the material.

External sources of ore in the Krivodol (Bulgaria) area was in the Bor and Maidanpek region, the deposit from Rudna Glava, in Plakalnitsa region (Vraca district). The techniques consist in opening vertical wells, along the oxidized routes of copper sulphide veins. The digging of the pit was done on the natural direction of the mining vein simultaneously applying the technique of heating and cooling the ore. It was then separated and ground using bone and stone tools, giving to it an original form, which shows an initial processing.

The presence of some copper articles-axes (in the men's graves), beads (in the women and children's graves), in necropolis of Ostrovul Corbului (Mehedinți County), Drăgănești-Olt (Olt County) and Gârlești (Dolj County), highlights the cultic character of the specified objects, more so that they do not present any signs of use. The large number of copper objects from Sălcuța- Bubaň-Krivodol cultural complex prefigures the development of copper metallurgy within Romanian territory.

The ceramics. Shape and ornament.

There is sufficient pottery, mostly fragmentary which was accidentally found, surveys or large-scale research (fig. 14-23). The stratigraphical facts found by research allow a detailed presentation and a systematical classification of the shapes and kinds of pottery of Sălcuța or from the level of living belonging to this culture.

Qualitatively, the pottery has been divided into: common use ceramics, semifine ceramics and fine ceramics. There are three big categories of ceramics whose impact in the everyday life of the community is different, the rough ceramics being represented the best. Being subject to fast aging, we can notice that the common use ceramics is messy, plenty of different degreasers being mixed up with the clay. The burning is uneven; the pottery's colour varies between brick-red-brown and brick-red, with grey stains together with some brown, light brown and smoky shades.

The burning, the purity of the clay, the treatment of the surface of the pottery, the slip, the polishing are the elements that we recognize at the fine pottery, the dominant colours being brick-red, with orange shades, along the coffee-brown, and rarely black. From the observations

referring to their dimension, the small size pottery usually belongs to this category.

Classifying the shape of the ceramics was based on the home usage criteria, being doubled by the shapes used.



Fig.14 - Pottery from Valea Anilor (settlement) and Ostrovul Corbului, Mehedinți County (cemetery). Photo C.N. Pătroi.

Food pottery: the tureen (the most common one), in different shapes that depend on how the wall was done and the rim; the bowl with a conical or biconical body, its edge making the difference while classifying them.

Drinking pottery: the cup, with one or two handles, is very often found. It is a sort of Sălcuța hallmark, the classification here it is done by the way the two handles are placed and the way that the edge was treated; amphora, in biconical shapes and of small dimension, very well represented at Ostrovul Corbului, Sălcuța and Verbicioara (E. C. Ștefan, 2011 a); the cup with a leg, a very rare object; the glass, with three subcategories that depend on how the body was made or the cup or the pot "with a beak" as D. Berciu used to name it because of its diagonal rim.

Cooking pottery: the pear-shaped pot, well represented at Almăjel (D. Galbenu, 1983), Drăgănești-Olt (M. Nica et al., 1995), Sălcuța (D. Berciu, 1961 b), the pan, the strainer.

The pottery for supplies: the amphoras, with the long neck and with two strong handles on its body, often seen in Ostrovul Corbului; the jar; round or bulging shaped pots; globular pots, the face.

Miniature pottery: in a large number.

Pottery in special shapes: the askos pot discovered at Sălcuța (D. Berciu, 1961 b), Cerăt

(Dolj County), Drăgănești-Olt (fig. 18), Reșca (D. Berciu, 1961), Verbicioara (D. Berciu, 1961 b): the kernoi pot, found only in Cloșani, Mehedinți County (D. Berciu, 1939); one legged or multiple leg vessel-fruit vessel, from Sălcuța; the chandelier (fig. 17) in the Eneolithic cemetery from Ostrovul Corbului, Mehedinți County (P. Roman, A. D. Opriteșcu, 2008), the pyxis, the support.

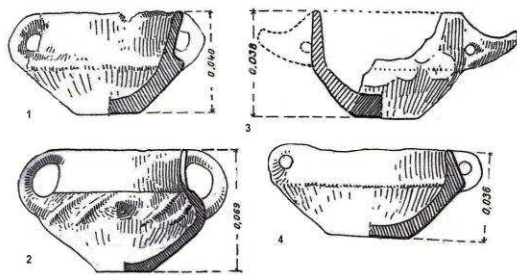


Fig.15 - The cups discovered at Sălcuța, Dolj County (after D. Berciu, 1961 b).

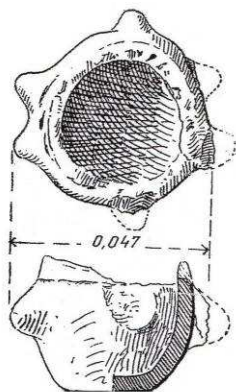


Fig. 16 - Miniature pottery Sălcuța, Dolj County (after D. Berciu, 1961 b).

Pottery of multiple uses: the bailer, the spoon.

Obviously, all shapes belong to the well known geometrical shapes, making them simple or complex executions: conical pots, biconical, spherical, rounded, cylindrical pots, pots made of three or four components. On their top details such as verge, drain pipe or the gutter, as others named them, is being added.

Pot lids were also found along sides of the pots, the typology being diverse: semi spherical lid, big, with a rounded hole in the center (D. Berciu, 1961 b), dome shaped lid- Ostrovul Corbului (M. Șimon, 1989) and Drăgănești-Olt

(M. Nica, 1994); cylindrical lid- Ostrovul corbului (M. Șimon, 1989), conical lid- Drăgănești-Olt (M. Nica, 1994), Verbicioara (E. C Ștefan, 2011), flat lid with a splay edge and a little handle in the center-Verbicioara (D. Berciu, 1961 b); lid in a special shape with anthropomorphic or sanctuary representations instead of a handle-Drăgănești-Olt (M. Nica, 1994), Salcuța (D. Berciu, 1961 b).

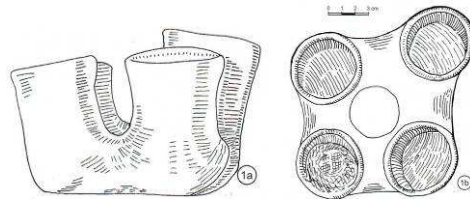


Fig. 17 - Pottery from Ostrovul Corbului, Mehedinți County (after P. Roman, A. D. Opriteșcu, 2008).



Fig. 18 - The askos pot discovered at Drăgănești – Olt. Photo C. N. Pătroi, 2012.

Obviously all these types of pots, with or without handles, show us the method of making and placement of these auxiliary elements in different typologies.

A very interesting category of pots is the one that has its ornament on the bottom of the vessel (C. N. Pătroi, 2009). An ornament that is made by incised lines, shape of a gamma cross, with shaded sides, appears on a bowl found in Ostrovul Corbului, the "Botul Cliuciului". At Valea Anilor (Mehedinți County), "La Glamie" a glass has on its bottom an ornament that was made with the nail, that seems not to have a well developed idea, the direction of the incisions and the way they are grouped being very diverse.

Chronologically, the inferior limit of these discoveries would be the early Neolithic, while the superior one is the late Eneolithic (the pottery from Sălcuța, as well as that from Insuratei,

Taşaul “La Ostrov” - area Gumelința A2). The most of it is from the developed Neolithic.



Fig. 19 - The askos pot discovered at Sălcuța, Dolj County (after D. Berciu, 1961 b).

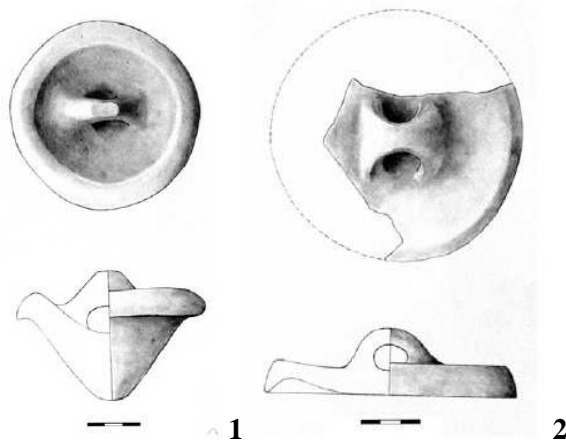


Fig. 20 - Lids from Verbicioara, Dolj County (after E. C. Ștefan, 2011).

The ceramic belonging to Sălcuța has a large variety of decorative motifs and technical procedures. Certainly we can name the technical procedures such as decorating by incisions, in relief, with notches, barbotine, by abscission (very few fragments), by scratching, by painting. The polishing technique appears on some pottery or fragments that were covered by a slip, but they are not ornamental motifs as in Gumelnița culture.

The painting ornaments are less found in Sălcuța. There are two types of painting:

a) Crusted - the floury coloured substance is applied after the burning of the pot, and then, the slip is put on top of it. Red and white are used alternating with the polishing of the empty spaces of the vase.

b) with graphite, which is mostly found on the interior. It appears quite rare (fig. 22-23).

The ornament is mostly applied on the visible side of the pot, the edge that is bent towards the exterior, the interior edge, when the orifice is splay; the neck, when it stands straight, cylindrical or byconical, the shoulder when it is prominent, the body, on the most rounded line of the vase, as well as the interior of the vases.

The motifs: organic strings (horizontal, vertical, diagonal, disorganized), ornament in brackets and ornament done with the nail, alveolar belts, grooves and fake grooves, the incision (chess board, shades, stairs, labyrinth, wolf teeth) or incisions combined with buttons, alveolus, dots, notches, visible models made of the pot's paste or applied, pricks, tree shell, abscission (rarely). The painting shows a combination of lanes, narrow or wide, thin or thick, made with raw colours or graphite, spirals, triangles, shaded triangles, deer etc.

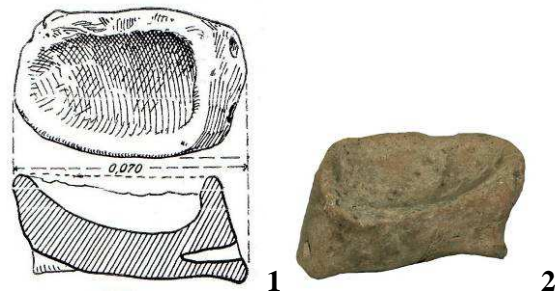


Fig. 21 - Bailer from Sălcuța “Piscul Cornișorului”-1 (D. Berciu, 1961 b), 2 – photo C. N. Pătroi.

Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic art

It is represented by anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines made from clay, anthropomorphic figurines from bone, anthropomorphic figurines from marble, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic attributes used to hold on containers, pottery beaks, anthropomorphic feet from clay, anthropomorphic containers (C. N. Pătroi, 2008 a).

By analysing the figurines according to the artistic and technique criteria, we can notice the following directions in which it will be acted for the realization of a profile. It is all about: the quality of the paste, the condition, the dimensions and the shape of the piece, the human category to whom belongs, the way of treating the anatomic groups, the background of the figurines, the

realization manner, the stratigraphic context and the complex where they were found.



Fig. 22 - Ornaments with graphite from Valea Anilor, "La Glamie" (Mehedinți County). Photo C. N. Pătroi.

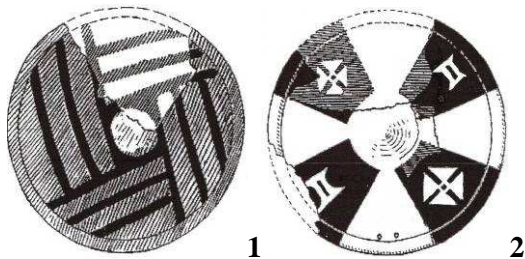


Fig. 23 - Decore with graphite from Sălcuța "Piscul Cornișorului" (D. Berciu, 1961 b).

The series of analysed pieces came from: the traces discovered in the points "Măgura Cetate" and "Măgura Fetelor" from Vădastra locality (V. Cristescu, 1927-1932; E. Comșa, 2007), Sălcuța "Piscul Cornișorului" (D. Berciu, 1961 b; S. M. Bîlcu R., R., Andreescu, 2005), Ostrovul Corbului (Al. Bărcăcilă, 1924; D. Berciu, 1951), Almăjel (D. Galbenu, 1983), Valea Anilor, Mehedinți County (I. Stângă, 1988), Drăgănești-Olt "Corboaica" (M. Nica et al., 1995; A. Grosu, 2004), Slatina "Strehareț" (C. Schuster, S. Popovici, 1998; 2000), Brebeni, Olt County (C. Schuster, S. Popovici, 1998; 2000). The image is completed by the pieces mentioned in "Arheologia preistorică a Olteniei" (D. Berciu, 1939), "Figurine antropomorfe din arealul culturii Sălcuța din Oltenia" (E. Comșa, 2007).

Close analogies can be found in the similar groups Bubanj and Kridovol, the pieces being discovered in the sits from Bakarno Gumno near Prilep, Pelagonia, Crnobuki near Bitola, Pelagonia (N. Tasič, 1995), Krivelj, Serbia (N. Tasič, 1957), Supljevek, Macedonia (N. Tasič,

1957), Makedonija (Macedonia), Crnobuki, Macedonia, Zlotska pecina, Serbia, Kovilovo (Bulgaria), Zaminet Bulgaria (V. Nikolov, 1975), Krivodol, Bulgaria (V. Mikov, 1948), Kolarovo, Bulgaria (L. Pernicheva, 1995), Varna, Bulgaria (H. Todorova, 1978), Maliq, Kosovo (F. Prendi, 1966), Lîga, district Pleven (K. Randsborg et al., 2005).

From the point of view of the material from which the anthropomorphic idols are made and of the paste quality, we are approaching the following situation: figurines made from raw paste containing clay, gravel and vegetal material; figurines made from clay containing gravel; figurines from clay well-chosen and battered, sometimes containing fine sand; marble figurines (Brebeni).

Depending on the medium in which they were manufactured and on the number of the burnings suffered, we are dealing with the following range of colours: black, brown, maroon, gray (Ostrovul Corbului, Sălcuța, Valea Anilor, Brebeni, Slatina "Strehareț"); red, brick, brick-grey (Sălcuța, Almăjel).

From the point of view of the human type to whom they belong we are dealing with: feminine idols (the most); male idols (pretty rare); hermaphrodite idols; anthropomorphic representations without any attribute helping them to be included in the first two groups.

From the point of view of the techniques used to realise the anthropomorphic figurines we can distinguish two categories: very schematised figurines, for whose execution the artist didn't file a too big creative effort (in some cases we can hardly assign the human form to some figurines); figurines made in a realistic manner to whom we can see the artist care to reproduce close to reality some particularities of the human body.

According to the techniques (fig. 24) used to represent the anatomical parts of the anthropomorphic figurines, we are facing the following execution manners:

-The face is realized by modelling the clay with fingers, as a 'pecker' or in two lobes type.

-The ears are shown either through perforations or by modelling the clay toward the external parts of the head.

-The eyes and the mouth are made from channels, points or alveoli. A piece from Brebeni has the eyes realized by the perforation of the entire head.

-The arms are elongated in the lateral of the body and holed transversally and longitudinally; they are placed on the chest or transversally along the body.

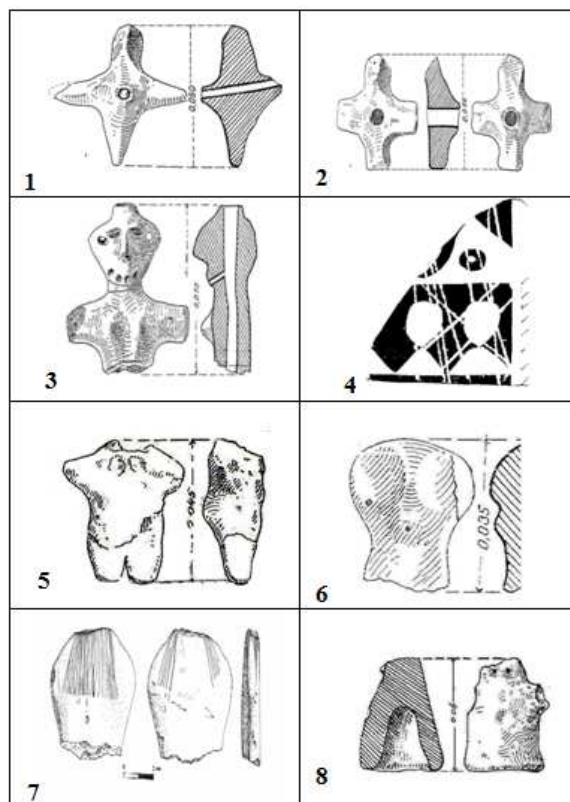


Fig. 24 - Anthropomorphic figurines from Sălcuța “Piscul Cornișorului”-1-3, 6-7 (D. Berciu, 1961 b), Valea Anilor, Mehedinți County – 4 (I. Stângă, 1988) and Vădastra , “Măgura Cetate”, Olt County -5 (V. Cristescu, 1927-1932).

-The breasts are either made from the figurines mass or they're added lately and they are cone-shaped prominences.

-The hips are usually well-evidenced and for underlying the border line between body and legs are used groups of cutting lines.

-The female gender is represented as a cut triangle with the base in the upper part.

-The legs are treated in several ways: either they are shaped separately or they are shown through cut lines. There are some examples having the inferior part as a compact, without showing any anatomic symbol. Some statues have some anatomic details well pointed out. It is about knees, ankles, fingers. It must be said that in the sits of Sălcuța culture, there were found

many fragments of human legs with a role in the period's culture under several interpretations.

From the point of view of the repartition on the vertical axis, according to the shape's aspect, the most of the idols are fusiform. Another category, less known, is the one of the “en cloche” idols. The latter, at the inferior part, present two aspects: the base is slightly chopped inside of the piece may have the interior of the inferior part empty. It must be mentioned the fact that, even they appear rarely in this environment, it does exist a category of anthropomorphic representations made as sitting (Sălcuța). One of the idols from Brebeni presents a circular stand at the inferior part (fig. 25).

There are some anthropomorphic figurines which present particular details different than the others. It is about a cylindrical prolongation in the superior part of the head. Another idol is vertically perforated on its entire surface (Sălcuța).

A technical approach rarely met in the execution way of the anthropomorphic figurines belonging to Sălcuța culture, is the one of “bonded halves” by the use of a bung (Ostrovul Șimian). As decoration used to accentuate some anatomic details or wardrobe pieces, the ornamental range include incisions as continuous or dotted lines, horseshoe bend, spirals, alveoli, cuttings, raw picture in red, white, black or yellow.

The anthropomorphic idols from the area of Sălcuța culture have small height, their dimensions varying between 0.5 cm and 15 cm. Anthropomorphic Art made from clay in Sălcuța type is represented mainly by female figurines, more rarely males, majority kept as fragments.

The representation of the anthropomorphic leg in neo-eneolithic carpathian-danubian plastics is a general phenomenon. Its perception is unitary and includes the following types found in anthropomorphic and zoomorphic art in Sălcuța culture:

-the massive anthropomorph leg, with or without shoes, most probably serving as a base for the cultural pieces.

-the massive anthropomorph leg, as independent piece, generally representing the wearing leg or suggesting the footwear.

-the inside naked anthropomorph leg representing the footwear and acting as a base for the bowl.

Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic art from clay of Sălcuța culture has many analogies in Gumelnița domain, phase B 1 (R. R., Andreescu, 2002).

Several ceramic fragments (M. Nica et al., 1995; E. C. Ștefan, 2011 b) discovered in Sălcuța show human figurines alike *Oranta* (C. N. Pătroi, 2012). For developing Sălcuța's culture from Banat, from Cuptoare "Sfocea" (A. Radu, 2002), a figurine applied on a bowl with several traces old white and red was discovered (fig. 26).



Fig. 25 - Anthropomorphic representations from Slatina "Strehareț" (Olt County). Photo C. N. Pătroi.

Anthropomorphic representations of bone

The researches of H. Dumitrescu from "Piscul Cornișorului", between 1945 -1946, led to the recovery of three complete anthropomorphic pieces made of bone (S. M. Bîlcu, R. R. Andreescu, 2005). Subsequently, also in Sălcuța (Berciu 1961 b) such anthropomorphic figurines appeared alongside another type of prismatic idols. The number of bone figurines is higher due to the researches from Drăgănești-Olt, "Corboaica" site (fig. 27) and from the settlement of Brebeni (Olt County).

From the point of view of treating the body of the figurines we can observe two different ways of making it, with different varieties of expression:

A. Human Body done by separate handling of the three distinct body parts: head, torso and arms, legs.

a.with stuck feet.

b.with the legs distinctly marked by incisions or cutting.

B. Human Body done by treating middle and lower part as a whole and a distinct head.



Fig. 26 - Human figurines alike *Oranta*. From Verbicioara, Dolj County (after E. C. Ștefan, 2011).

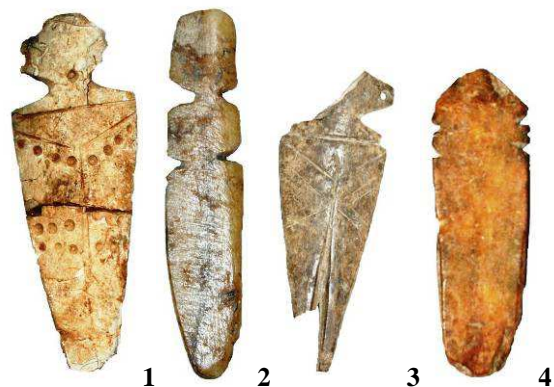


Fig. 27 - Anthropomorphic representations on bones from Drăgănești-Olt. Photo C. N. Pătroi.

Bone anthropomorphic figurines from Salcuta showing holes on the surface, had no traces of copper in the area where they have been breached, nor had circular ornaments attached when discovered, as happened in the Gumelnița both north and south of the Danube.

Comparing the anthropomorphic representations of bone found in area of Salcuta culture with pieces found in north-Danube, Gumelnița culture, and also with the and pieces found in Bulgaria, we can speak about the same cultural phenomenon Chalcolithic, the same approach, both as a form and as decoration.

Zoomorphic representations of clay

There are quite a few such pieces. We refer to a zoomorphic vessel from Brebeni (Olt County), a buffalo head from Salcuta, "Piscul Cornișorului" (S. M. Bîlcu, R. R. Andreescu, 2005) of the H. Dumitrescu campaign, a fragment of a zoomorphic idol all from Sălcuța discovered by H. Dumitrescu, an ox from the Valea Anilor, Mehedinti County (I. Stângă, 1988). From the researches of D. Berciu, "Piscul Cornișorului", in 1951, comes a group of six zoomorphic figurines.

At Ostrovul Corbului resort (Mehedinți County) were found more vessels with zoomorphic protomes. A single vessel anthropo - zoomorphic was certified to Salcuța - painted pedestal bowl shaped human feet below the rim, grab ram head shaped (D. Berciu, 1939).

The cultic

The main artefacts are altars. Very few discoveries as we mention an altar cup-shaped quadrilateral with four legs, is modeled in a sloppy paste modest and secondary burned in a house at the site of the first Salcuța level (S. M. Bîlcu, R. R. Andreescu, 2005). Some fragments were discovered at Cerăt and Verbicioara, Dolj County (E. C. Ștefan, 2011) (fig. 28), Valea Anilor, Mehedinți County (C. N. Pătroi, 2012 b).

Specimens found in sites assigned to Salcuța culture are rectangular or triangular, with short legs, presenting ornaments registers made by incision and meandering incised lines arranged in a network. Sometimes they have traces of inlay with white paste.

For Bubanj group, cultural group synchronous Salcuța of Serbia, N. Tasić has two cult shrines at Krivelj and Kovilovo (N. Tasić, 1957). The cult shrines triangular are documented in Bulgaria, at Lîga (K. Randsborg et al., 2005), in a group setting synchronous Krivodol.

Miniature cult tray tables, such as the one from Vadastra and **cult chairs** (M. Nica, 1994; S. M. Bîlcu, R. R. Andreescu, 2005) or **miniature thrones**, complete the picture of the side of existence harder to capture in archaeological research (fig. 29).

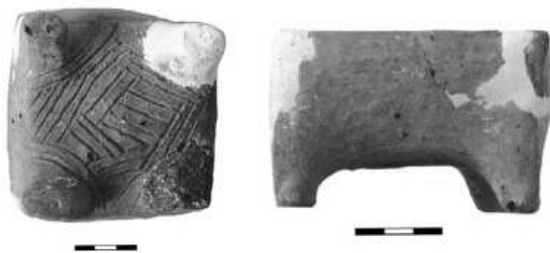


Fig. 28 - The cultic artifacts from Verbicioara, Dolj County (after E. C. Ștefan, 2011).

Amulets, adornments: clay beads with biconical form with cylindrical hole are attested in Ostrovu Mare, Ostrovul Corbului (county Mehedinți), Vădastra, Magura Cetate (Olt County), Lîga (group Krivodol) - Bulgaria and usually found in graves; bone and antler

pendants; rings and copper beads; bracelets made of Spondylus shell.

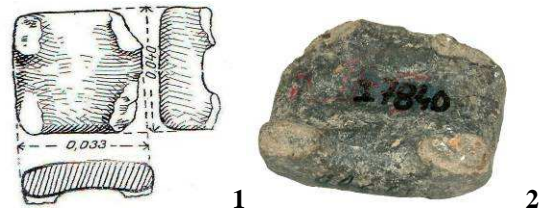


Fig. 29 - Miniature on Salcuța "Piscul Cornîșorului"-1 (D. Berciu, 1961 b); 2- photo C. N. Pătroi.

Salcuța culture periodization and elements of relative and absolute chronology

The period of development of the cultural Salcuța-Bubanj-Krivodol is characterized by several specific elements, namely:

- Intensification of copper mining from Rudna Glava, Ai Bunar and copper processing on a large scale;

- Migrations of Indo-European peoples from the steppes to the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area;
- Acting as a filter and then as the transmitter for the southern influences of these elements on large areas.

The basic elements that characterize different stages of evolution of this cultural group, could be separated using data obtained from: studying the findings from settlements with several stratigraphic levels, global comparison - within certain geographical microzones - materials from different places; typological developments of various cultural elements components, inserting archaeological settlements or levels depending on imports or received influences from other cultures or period established, the study of the elements of tradition and cultural backgrounds transmitted either prior or subsequent cultural backgrounds. All these elements made it possible to claim that the evolution of complex Salcuța-Bubanj-Krivodol spans three major chronological periods:

- The training-Phase I;

- The maximum crystallization and development-phase II subphases II a, II b and II c;

- Classical period-phase III, subphases III A and III B.

Based on regional differences (related to older funds) in the Carpathian - Balkan settled

three main cultural groups: Gumelnița-Karanovo VI-Kodjadermen-in Thrace, part of the north-eastern Bulgaria, Muntenia and Dobrogea; Sălcuta-Bubanj - Krivodol-in the north-western Bulgaria, southern and western Romania, Eastern Serbia; Varna-from Stara Planina at the Danube - a coastal strip they get more than 25 - 35 km inwards. The findings so far confirm our background and a common cultural heritage. The three main entities can be treated and analyzed separately.

The evolution of Sălcuța culture occurs simultaneously with the start of a long and lengthy process of cultural unification focused on Transylvanian copper areas and colour reception and filtering of cultural property from the south of Danube. Establishing its evolutionary phases is possible by the multiplication of systematic investigations of Sălcuța settlements and in areas neighbouring cultures.

Sălcuța derived materials found in stratigraphic context at Drăgănești-Olt "Corboaica" and Romula "Dealul Morii", confirmed they contemporaneity between Gumelnița B1 and Sălcuța I cultures, in a moment when the first culture was in the final evolutionary stage.

Pottery decorated with comb, technique having Eastern origin, fragments of Cucuteni C type vessels decorated with cufflinks "au repoussé" style (fig. 30), decorated with cord wrapped, using crushed shell splinters and crushed and mixed with crushed shell, bowl with relatively high margin, inclined inwards, with shoulder knobs drilled or punched vertical projections made by pushing organic paste inside the vessel, the tread surface, or applied organic belt just below the rim and grooves disposed, decoration in the form of caterpillars, plastic lip line that marks the edge of the body contact and the body of the pots that have oblong S shaped profile, all found in the settlements of Sălcuța, Vădastra, Ostrovul Corbului, Drăgănești-Olt, Brătești posits a synchronism Cernavoda-Sălcuța III, posterior phases Gumelnița B 1.

Stratigraphic study of the content of each level from Bubanj demonstrated that it can not be an exact match between them and Sălcuța. Analogies Bubanj level I refers to the Sălcuța sub-phase II c. This means that, chronologically, a parallelism between the two groups begin to take place in the Sălcuța II c and Bubanj I a.

The second synchronic moment is the Sălcuța III-Bubanj I b, when begin to appear some *helanic* items that create the premises of the end of Sălcuța-Bubanj complex and chronologically the phases Sălcuța III - Bubanj I b represent a late period.

Based on impressions of "wrapped string" from Šupljevec, we can speak of a contemporary Sălcuța II-III and Šupljevec-Bakarno-Gumno Group. It should be noted that in this area reached the common carriers of Cernavoda I culture.

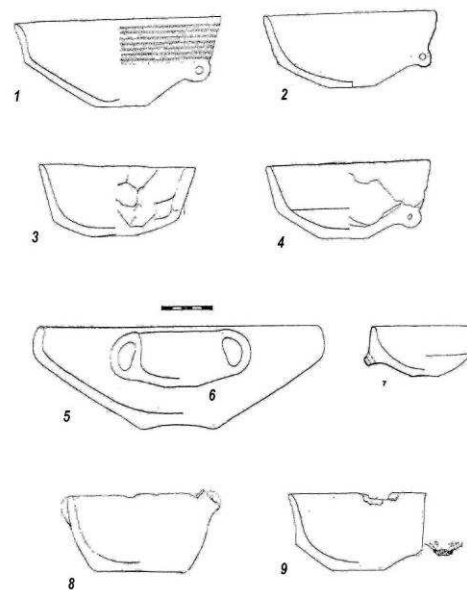


Fig. 30 - Pottery on Ostrovul Corbului (Mehedinți County) (after M. Șimon, 1989).

In western Bulgaria, the Krivodol group is descended of Krivodol Gumelnița-Karanovo VI-Kodjadermen complex. The first phase is known from Krivodol, Dyakovo (near Kustendil), second and third from Krivodol, Zaminetz, Pernic and Galatin and the unifying phenomenon cultural Sălcuța type IV from Telisha, Rebrukovo and other points. Based on pottery vases depicting profiles, bowls of all kinds, vases with two handles, painted fragments that have analogues in phase Sălcutța I, we can speak about Krivodol phase I. On the same criteria were established Krivodol II and Krivodol III phases. Valuable clues were obtained from Devetaki cave where Krivodol Phase I is well

documented (pottery with graphit).

Timeline relative elements are being confirmed by C14 dating. The few C14 analyzes for Sălcuța culture are from the settlements from Curmătura, Ostrovul Corbului and "Peștera Hoților" from Băile Herculane, Caraș-Severin County. The data for Krivodol were combined with the results obtained from samples of settlements from Lîga, Pipra, Krivodol, Golijamata Pesteră, Teliș.

If the data for the north Danube area converge between 4451-3980 cal. B.P., for the north - western part of Bulgaria data fall between 4330 - 4020 cal. B. P.

Sălcuța culture evolution seen through interdisciplinary analyzes

From the site Drăgănești-Olt tell (G. El Susi, 2006) were collected and determined 3645 bones, fragments of which 3570 come from mammals (percentage 98%). There were identified five species of domestic mammals (cattle, sheep, goat, pig, dog) and 11 species hunted (deer, boar, horse, deer, bull, rabbit, bear, marten, badger, beaver and fox). Regarding the species dynamic on levels we were able to observe the following:

- Cattle register a decrease in the typical end of the Eneolithic from 27% (Gumelnița A2) - 21% (level Sălcuța).

- Goats lower from 23% / 21% to 8%.

- Pigs record growth, 21% -27%.

- Canids double their share in the Sălcuța , 7%.

From the data on the samples examined, it appears that there is a reversal in the economy of the site to the Sălcuța culture toward Gumelnița. Hunt returns. All changes relating to the number of the registered mammals are due to a crisis in the livestock economy of the site at the end of the Eneolithic.

Another perspective we have from the osteological material found in the necropolis of Ostrovul Corbului, Mehedinți County and that was also subjected to analysis (G. El Susi, 2012). Overall, among the analyzed faunal remains prevalent the bones of small mammals, pig, sheep, goat, widespread in Eneolithic habitation (default Sălcuța culture). As a general trend, we observe low share of cattle and strong increases of hunted species. Among them, the highest percentage, 26-21%, is accounted to deer. At a small difference is followed by wild boar, with 22 to 12.6%.

Instead of conclusions

At first glance, trying to identify the origins of Sălcuța is quite difficult. Analysis of the main elements of civilization that belonged to these communities gives us some working hypotheses. In the late Neolithic, Oltenia region has several cultural phenomena that come to be contemporary, although most of their evolution occurred in a prior chronologically period.

Gumelnița communities from Oltenia were present in the evolutionary phase B 1. Civilization with a variety of shapes and motifs, modes of execution and organization of the decor has a consistent presence in the development of Sălcuța culture.

The influences and similarities we meet in the pottery: form (bowl rim thickened inwardly curved rim inside bowl and those with shoulder, tapered bowl with straight walls, slightly curved or concave, bowl high edge at right angles or rounded edge bowl short, straight or slightly flared foot cups, bowl inside sloping edge, sharp shoulder bowl, cup, bowl or bowl bulging body, biconical vessel, dish hemispherical, pear-shaped bowl, cover, supply vessels, vessels, threshold, biconical vessels with high neck, truncated, miniature vases, bowl, drain tube, amphora, vessel askos) and decoration (incised lines, reasons point, so angular, spiral motif, triangle, square, why curvilinear, semicircle). We find them in the execution techniques: impressions, nicks, incisions, topography (cufflinks, pleats, belts alveolar), slurry, painting, cruel, painting graphite in anthropomorphic clay and bone, rite and ritual.

In the current state of researches and information we know, we believe that we can talk about Sălcuța culture (C. N. Pătroi, 2011 a) as a Gumelnița cultural phenomenon origin.

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