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Photo on the cover: gold earring from Zimnicea cemetery

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THE EARLY BRONZE AGE ON THE LOWER OLT¹

CRISTINEL FÂNTÂNEANU

Keywords: the Lower Olt basin, the Early Bronze Age, cultural manifestations, Zimnicea, Glina, Gornea-Orlești, habitation, archaeological material, periodization, chronology, cultural relations.

Cuvinte-cheie: bazinul Oltului inferior, epoca timpurie a Bronzului, manifestări culturale, Zimnicea, Gornea-Orlești, locuire, material arheologic, periodizare, cronologie, relații culturale.

I. Geographic space and its natural resources

The Olt basin is the fourth amongst the largest basins of our country. It encompasses a wide network of rivers and measures a surface of approximately 24,300 kmp. The hydrographic Basin of the Lower Olt can be considered the one situated south of the Meridional Carpathians beginning with the Cozia gorge, where it comes out, up to its flow into the Danube, upstream from Turnu Măgurele.

The relief is represented by forms of 2nd and 3rd order. Those of 2nd order (mountains, hills, highlands, fields) are being arranged in steps on the north-south direction, beginning with altitudes over 2,000 m and reaching up to lower field altitudes, under 100 m, but also meadows. Over the relief forms of 2nd order, there is overlapped the micro relief (3rd order), with valleys, terraces, dunes etc. The higher steps, of the Parâng, Căpățâni, and Cozia Mountains that belong to the Meridional Carpathians represent the origin of the largest tributaries of the Lower Olt River.

It is discussed more often about “a certain aridisation of the climate at the end of the Eneolithic and in the Bronze Age. This amplified the steppic conditions in the Lower Danube field, imposing a mobility of the shepherds”. According to some authors, between 3700 and 2500 BC it could be considered that the postglacial optimum ended and the aridisation began, which subsequently would lead, especially during the Bronze Age, to a warmer and dry climate, passing from silvo-steppe to steppe vegetation. This is why we are inclined to consider that, among the basic occupations of the Early Bronze Age communities, including the range we are focused upon, the cattle breeding played a significant role.

II. The cultural and chronological space of the EBA in the Lower Olt basin

Towards the end of the Eneolithic time, within

the space of the Lower Olt basin, especially the Sălcuța Culture became manifested. Such settlements, belonging to the mentioned cultural manifestation we could encounter both in the north range, but also in its south. In the north, Sălcuța habitations could be identified in Valea Sâlei (Orlești comm.), Coasta Ungurenilor (Ocnele Mari), Rm. Vâlcea-Cețățuia, Căzănești-Fabrică, Dobriceni, Obogeni (Stoilești comm.), Gruicul Lupului (Racovița comm.), Govora Sat-Treime, while in south the most representative settlement of the Sălcuța Culture we consider to be the one from Drăgănești Olt-Corboaică.

When taking into account the transitional period, in the space that we focus on and the one closely neighboring to the east, or the east-central European one, would have been manifested the central peninsular circle, and they included, according to Petre Roman, would have also the groups and cultural groups of Orlea-Sadovec, Celei, Coțofeni, Baden, Kostolac, Vučedol. Especially in its south, this is a buffer zone where, following some ethnic flows and mixtures, as well as some cultural influences, together with Central Muntenia, the first communities of the EBA from Romania would have emerged. We refer here to the necropolis from Zimnicea (even if it is not located in the space that we are focusing on but in its close eastern vicinity, we would render it here for a better understanding of the EBA phenomenon on a larger range), as part of a more extended complex – which is Zimnicea-Mlăjeț-Sânzieni-Turia – reaching up to the south-eastern areas of Transylvania. In the northern part of the range that we will study here, we would find Coțofeni settlements at Ocnele Mari-Zdup, Ocnele Mari-Ștrand, Rm. Vâlcea-Cețățuia, Bârsești-Chiciurila, Căzănești-Fabrica de Cărămidă, Căzănești-Săveasca, Modoia-Vârful Cuculici, the tumular necropolis at Milostea etc. In turn, in the southern part of the region that we refer to, we could find discoveries belonging to the Cernavodă III (i.e. – Drăgănești Olt-Corboaică).

As was already demonstrated by Petre Roman, the first manifestations of the EBA in the proximal space of the Lower Olt basin are represented by the

¹This is the summary of the author's doctoral thesis, defended in 2005 at the “Ovidius” University of Constanta, Faculty of History, Department of Ancient and Medieval History, under the scientific coordination of Prof. Dr. Petre I. Roman.

necropolis from Zimnicea. This is situated on the same chronological level with the Coțofeni IIa (pre-Glina), based upon the following synchronism: Coțofeni I – pre-Glina – Troy II. The *askoi* vessels in the Zimnicea necropolis and the one from Batin (its correspondent south of the Danube) have close analogies in the settlement from Junatsite.

The Glina Culture has its formation center somewhere in the region of Bucharest and its surroundings, an area where the oldest vestiges have been found. In its classical phases, this cultural manifestation would initiate a migration to the west, at the same time maintaining its eastern line with a remarkable defensive balance that was owed, most probably, to the constant pressure of the different groups belonging to the tumular ochre burials (i.e. tumular burials from Gurbănești).

As we have already mentioned above, the Glina Culture, in its classical phases, would initiate a movement to the west. Thus, reaching the space that we study now (the lower Olt basin), they would provide at least two phases (II and III) which covered the entire range that we are dealing with. In the southern half, the Glina levels have overlapped layers belonging to the 2nd phase of the Coțofeni Culture (the best example being the settlement from Branet) and they formed their second evolution stage. In the northern part of the studied range, the Glina communities would replace the communities of the Coțofeni IIIc phase (of Govora Sat – *Runcuri* type, influenced by the decoration style of the Vučedol Culture). Thus, we are dealing with a new, distinct phase, the 3rd one, of the Glina Culture, that would cover, if not completely, at least in part its distribution area. These are the two phases of the Glina Culture, that would surely manifest themselves within the space of the Lower Olt basin, being still unknown if we are also dealing with a 4th phase – Ostrovul Corbului - (final) on the territory in discussion (the vessel that is considered to be a cremation urn, in a stone cist from Govora Sat-*Runcuri*, has raised big question marks about the truthfulness of this find).

The Gornea-Orlești Cultural Group has emerged in the last stage, the third of the EBA. This cultural horizon has originated somewhere in Central Europe, from where it subsequently migrated to the east and south-east. It could cover the Banat, as well as the largest part of Transylvania, Oltenia proper (right from the Olt River). In the lower basin of the mentioned river we also have settlements of Gornea-Orlești type at *Reșca-Romula Villa Suburbana*, *Orlești-Sâlea*, *Govora Sat-Treime*, *Ocnele Mari-Zdup* etc. These are characterized, firstly, by an association of the channeled pottery with the one decorated with textile ornaments and honey comb. Therefore, this 3rd period of the EBA in the Lower Olt basin would be the one that evolved since the end of the Glina Culture and would lead to the emergence of the first manifestations of the Middle Bronze Age, in our case the Verbicioara Culture.

The recent publication of some works that have tackled the problems regarding the definition and

terminology of the Bronze Age and especially its early period, as well as some aspects connected to different chronological systems, have spared us of such an effort. We believe that, from the above lines, it could be clearly inferred that for the EBA of the Lower Olt basin, we would use the chronological system that was advanced by Petre Roman that we considered to be mostly appropriate for the cultural realities of the epoch in the above mentioned space.

III. Cultural horizons belonging to the EBA in the Lower Olt basin

III. 1. The necropolis from Zimnicea

About the location. The necropolis from Zimnicea was situated on a mound that raised about 1 km north on the terrace of the Danube river. Most burials were concentrated to the eastern zone of the necropolis towards the point of maximal altitude. A large number of interments have been destroyed, because cemeteries of subsequent periods have been discovered on the same spot, to which modern tillage works have been added.

Description of the funerary complexes. The number of skeletons have reached 44, 6 of them coming from double burials. To all these, 10 are being added, which have preserved just few remains. Most of the skeletons have been laid in a flexed position, with a distinct arrangement of the arms and legs. There are also few skeletons buried on their “chest”, in just a single case with the sight to the ground.

Out of the total number of skeletons, 36 have their general orientation with the head to the south, having slight deviations to south-east, or south-west. As regards the deceased setting on one side, or another, 33 have been placed on their right side. Out of these, one has come from a double burial (M 33-34). Two other skeletons have been placed on their left side, one of them coming from the above mentioned burial. Another skeleton has been set on its back side, with its legs fallen to the left and its head to the right. Another group, of seven skeletons has been orientated to the west, with slight deviations to south-west. As mentioned above, one of the double burials has contained a skeleton on its right side and the other on the left side, while another double burial has both skeletons on their left side. Also the skeletons in other two interments have been placed on the left side. In a single case, the deceased has been laid on its right side and had its head to the east.

Yet, there are few even more interesting situations: in burial no. 11, about 1 m a stone agglomeration has been found, above the skeleton while the second particular situation was the one of two stone layers that overlapped several interments. Another special case was the fact that in a group of seven burials, just one of them had a funerary inventory, represented by pottery (B 22), while other six, in a better preservation state, have exclusively contained metal items. In burial no. 5 a bone pin was found. Five of the interments have contained red

ochre, either as lumps, or as dust.

In most of the cases, each burial has contained just a single vessel, placed either near the head of the deceased (B 2, 4, 30, 31, 33-34, 36, 48, 49, 51, 54), or near its legs (B 8, 11, 16, 17, 23, 52). Just two interments have contained two vessels: burial no. 5 and no. 9.

Archaeological material. Pottery. Metal items. Generally, the paste didn't have a good quality. In many cases, this composition of the paste provided the pottery a coarse look; the slip couldn't possibly cover the roughness of the paste. The firing is rather weak, or unequal, in most of the cases.

Within the necropolis, we can distinguish as forms, several types of receptacles: the vessel (mug) of *askos* type, which prevailed among the ceramic forms, the vessel with protruding body and a more or less high neck, the vessel with globular body and a more or less high and truncated neck, the slightly averted and deep dish. The decoration consisted in small protuberances, notched, or alveolated belts, more or less fine notches, fine incisions that formed hachured triangles. The metal items have comprised adornments: lock rings, necklaces pieces, pendants, bracelets.

Cultural and chronological assignment. It is obvious that the south-danubian correspondent of the necropolis from Zimnicea is the necropolis from Batin, in Bulgaria, comprising 11 burials. Thus, as regards the position and orientation of the skeletons, their large majority has been laid on their right side and had their head with a southern orientation.

If we refer to the funerary inventory of the necropolis from Zimnicea, we could notice that the usual forms were the mugs with an oblique cut rim (*askos*). In most of the burials (23) there is just a single vessel deposited, while in two of them two vessels have appeared. Also as we mentioned, as inventory items have been discovered adornments, respectively earrings-pendants. The *askos* type mugs, which are the predominant form in the necropolis from Zimnicea, have clearly a southern origin. In the opinion of the author who had carried out the excavations, this is a form rather closely resembling the one discovered in several copies at Junatsite. It is considered that this specific type could have evolved in the one from Zimnicea, while the items from Cârna and Kruşoviţa could be intermediate forms between those two types. Yet, we consider that these analogies could be made in just a general sense, because the *askoi* from Zimnicea are of a totally another kind.

For the vessels with thin neck, we also find analogies in the Coţofeni Culture, at Măceşul de Jos and Ostrovul Corbului. A fragmentary vessel similar to the burial no. 4 comes from Orlea and is being assigned to the Celei Culture. Also, a similar form could be found at Ostrovul Corbului. Still, we have to stress that the analogies are not perfect and they cannot be taken as being sure.

Concerning the decoration of the vessels from the Zimnicea necropolis, we will find correspondences in distinct spaces and milieus. Thus, similar buttons

are to be found on an *askos* belonging to the Sălcuţa Culture, or on a fragment of handle in the milieu of the Cernavodă III Culture. Also, such bottoms we identified on the shoulder of a Cernavodă II dish, on a vessel in Burial no. 8 of the necropolis from Brăiliţa or another, belonging to the Schneckenberg Culture. Lines of more or less relieved notches appear also in the Cernavodă I and Cernavodă II culture. The last of these vessels has also a handle which is similar to the one uncovered in burial no. 26 in the necropolis from Zimnicea. Such lines of notches we also find on the pottery from Coşereni, on the vessel in the burial from Răcăciuni, or in the necropolis from Brăiliţa.

The discovery of a Coţofeni type vessel shows, in our opinion, at least their partial contemporaneity with this cultural manifestation. We believe that this occurred, as already pointed out by Roman, at the Coţofeni IIa level, namely a pre-Glina level. The manner of emphasizing the rim, as well as the shoulder of the vessels, by using notches – of a Cernavodă II tradition – reminds us of the Ezerovo II range.

The lock rings are of the same type like those uncovered in the tumular ochre burials from Romania and Bulgaria. The necklaces have rather good analogies with those in the tumular ochre burials in north-east Hungary. Concerning the metal pearls, they resemble in shape with the amber ones discovered in the burials from Szöreg.

Besides the archaeological material that we tackled by now, it was also discovered a fragmentary stone axe, that is similar in shape with the one from Tufa, but also with the one from Răcăciuni.

We mentioned the analogies of some vessels from the necropolis with receptacles from Măceşu de Jos, Basarabi, or Ostrovul Corbului. Still, we have to stress here that the analogies are not perfect; therefore we have to accept them with some reluctance. If they would prove to be real, we will have to lower down the chronology of the Zimnicea necropolis somewhere after the beginning of the Glina Culture, fact that in the current stage of research we consider to be a somewhat risky enterprise. We are rather inclined to believe that, especially by the *askos* type mugs, that prevailed in the necropolis from Zimnicea a strong cultural impulse should be considered (maybe even an ethnic one ?) coming from the south – that penetrated up to south-east Transylvania – of Ezero (A2 ?) type. An analogy for this process we could identify in the emergence of the Orlea – Sadovec group.

III. 2. Glina Culture. Settlements. Location

The communities of the Glina Culture have established their settlements on a rather varied relief, taking into account several factors: their proximity to a water source, their natural fortification, climate, the form of economy that they used to practice. Therefore, on the Lower Olt basin, we could find Glina settlements on the river terraces, their natural conditions being represented by the fact that some of them have been placed on the river meanders (Braneţ, Govora Sat, Căzăneşti – Cărămidărie, Arsanca, Buleta etc.). Some

other times, the foothills, as well as higher promontories have been preferred, as they provided better defense conditions by their slopes, but also a good surveillance of the surroundings (Călina, Bârsești, Gura Văii – Căzănești, Govora Sat – “Runcuri” – mentioning that in time, in the latter settlement, a lot of landslides have occurred). In the northern space that we are focused on, some cave habitations have been also found (Ciunget, Peștera Haiducilor). The Eneolithic tells have been also considered – Drăgănești Olt – “Corboaică”.

Settlement types. Generally, the Glina settlements did not undergo an artificial fortification, the rare exceptions (Crivăț, Odaia Turcului) confirming the rule. Just in the settlement from Orbeasca de Sus could be detected traces of a defense ditch belonging to the communities of the Glina Culture. This is due to the fact that their large majority took the benefit of their natural defending conditions. Still, there is a possibility that these settlements could have been surrounded by a fence of wickerwork, whose traces are difficult, or even impossible to be archaeologically traced.

Dimensions and duration of use. Concerning the dimensions of the Glina settlements from the Lower Olt basin, the same as in the entire range of this cultural manifestation, it is impossible to offer a precise answer. This is resulted from the fact that no Glina settlement has been completely investigated. Yet, we believe that they were small “hamlets”, comprising several dwellings. Regarding their duration of use, this was usually short, sometimes even seasonal. This fact is being proved by the thickness of the cultural layer that, in the large majority of cases doesn't go over 0.30 m – Bârsești, Căzănești – Căramidărie, Căzănești – Platformă, Buleta. But, there were also bigger settlements, with a cultural layer having a thickness over 0.50 m – Branet. In others, where it was a seasonal habitation, there is no cultural layer, the Glina materials being found just in a sporadically manner. This is the case of the cave habitations – Ciunget, Peștera Haiducilor.

The inner organization of the settlements. This is a rather difficult task to be solved in this stage of research, because, as we have already stated above, no Glina settlement could be exhaustively investigated by now. It seems they were arranged with no rule, without a previously established plan, but in a compact manner. It is also the case of the settlement from Branet. Most possibly, within the settlement, two sectors must have existed: one destined to the people, the other to the animals.

Dwellings. Dwelling types. For the Glina Culture there are documented both deepened and above ground dwellings. The deepened dwellings are to be found in just a settlement of the range under study: Morărești. This deepened dwelling had an oval shape and had no furnishing.

We consider this lack of finds concerning deepened dwellings of the Glina Culture in the Lower Olt basin as a result of the current stage of investigation. It is our belief that the bearers of this culture had a preference for one, or another one

of these constructions, in different stages of their development.

If the number of deepened dwellings is small, in turn, that of the above ground ones is much bigger. They are found as adobe agglomerations, without traces of the pole pits, thus creating a difficulty regarding the establishing of their shape and dimensions. This fact could be detected in the settlement from Govora Sat-Runcuri. Here, Petre Roman discusses about the fact that insufficient traces have been found, in order to establish the dwelling type – excepting adobe traces, sometimes bearing imprints of twigs and beams. In turn, at Drăgănești Olt, the outlines of the above ground dwelling are somewhat more precisely emphasized. Thus, dwelling no. 1 (LG 1) measured about 4.10 x 3.20 m and had a NW-SE orientation. The inventory it contained comprised pottery, flint splinters, a chariot wheel, animal bones, as well as a fragmentary axe. The dwelling no. 2 (LG 2) had the approximate dimensions of 4.25 x 3.45 m. At Branet, even if we don't know the real dimensions of the dwellings, the author has stated that they had a rectangular shape: in fact, most of them were rectangular, but there were also square ones – i.e. dwelling no. 13, investigated in 1981, had the dimensions of 6 x 6 m, while the one bearing no. 12 discovered in 1979 measured 4 x 4 m.

The above ground dwellings are small, or middle sized, in most of the cases. This kind of dwellings we find, for instance, at Branet, where they have dimensions of 2 x 3 m, or 2.80 x 1.90 m. In the same settlement we also find big sized constructions – i.e. dwelling no. 13 measured 6 x 6 m.

Any special fittings of the floors could be detected, the habitation level being marked just by big river stone agglomerations. The construction system of the Glina dwelling was the wattle and daub, while the roofs, both belonging to the deepened dwellings and the above ground ones, were made of reed, or straw. In our opinion this is an argument that the large majority of the Glina settlements have ended in fires, also considering the open hearths, both inside and outside the dwellings, fact that facilitated the burning of the dwellings. Regarding the destination of such constructions, it is mostly possible that the bigger ones could have served some aspects connected with the spiritual life of the respective community.

The inventory of the above ground dwellings was, as already mentioned, the same like the one uncovered in the deepened ones. It is heterogeneous and it comprises pottery, clay, antler, or stone objects and exceptionally, metal ones.

Pits, hearths, ovens. In all Glina settlements systematically investigated pits have been uncovered. Such complexes have been found both inside the dwellings and outside them. In the range of the Lower Olt basin there are pear shaped pits, at Drăgănești Olt, in the settlement from Morărești, at the western limit of the space under study, containing as inventory a lot of adobe, ceramic fragments, ash and three flint truncated and cylindrical cores. At Branet, inside the dwellings, there are oval shallow pits that contain ash, charcoal fragments, and animal and bird bones,

together with ceramic remains. Their destination was possibly a domestic one, for keeping the trash.

The hearths have been also uncovered inside and outside the dwellings. Thus, at Drăgănești Olt it was found a hearth with a thick layer of burning, with different reconstructions, fact which proves its longer use. At Braneț, in dwellings nos. 5-7, 10, 12, 13 some rounded hearths have been discovered, with several reconstructions and repairments. Their dimensions have varied between 0.70 m and 1.50 m. Also, hearths have been found in the same settlement, with a thin layer of burning, used for a shorter time. Hearths have been also uncovered at Govora Sat-Runcuri Ciobea, Țeica, Rm. Vâlcea-str. *Calea lui Traian*, Govora Băi, Arsanca.

The destination of the hearths was, in their immense majority, a domestic one, being used for cooking. Still, near the hearth inside the dwelling no. 10 from Braneț a chariot wheel was discovered, but also a votive axe, made of fine clay. It is possible that, at least in some certain moments, such hearths could have been also destined for the cultic activities. The oven had exclusively a domestic use. In the Lower Olt basin just a single case was discovered, the one from Drăgănești Olt.

Funerary complexes. The data about the funerary rites and rituals belonging to the bearers of the Glina Culture are extremely scarce and contradictory, on the entire range. In the space under study the only funerary complex is the one discovered at Govora Sat-Runcuri but, its situation is completely uncertain. Yet, if the archaeological context rendered by the author is the real one, by the analogies that could be found between the vessel that was used as an urn (being a cremation burial) and other receptacles from the distribution range of the later phase of the Glina Culture (= the 4th one) and that of the bearers of the stone cist burials, we are inclined to assign the mentioned complex to the latter ones.

The archaeological material. Lithic industry. Generally, the lithic inventory of the Glina Culture is made of Prebalkanian flint. There are no exceptions from this situation, even when considering the lithic artifacts in the Lower Olt basin. The working techniques of this material are by chopping-retouchés and by polishing.

Therefore, in the settlement from Govora Sat-Runcuri flint splinters could be found, having a low quality and traces of being used as blades, or razors. At the same time, there were also identified quartzite splinters. At Drăgănești Olt there were also flint blades and several splinters of the same material, probably residues remained after processing. Also in the category of the blades could be also included the items discovered at Braneț.

Other categories of chopped stone, as the gratoirs and razors have been discovered in the settlement of Braneț, the most intensely investigated within the range we are dealing with here. At Rm. Vâlcea-Cețățuia has been also found a curved knife, made of chopped stone. In the category of the chopped stone weapons we have to include also those two arrow points, uncovered within the perimeter of the

dwelling no. 11 from Braneț.

Concerning the polished stone artifacts, they are: chisels (Govora Sat-Runcuri), grinders and polishers (Braneț), axes (Braneț, Govora Băi). A wider distribution in the range that we are dealing with us could find in the case of the unperforated axes, with a circular groove (for "mining"). These items have been discovered in a larger number in the northern space of the Lower Olt basin, but they are not missing in the south too. Concerning their functionality, if for the artifacts in northern Oltenia, situated close to the salt, or copper deposits, their use as mining hammers was possible (for breaking the salt, or the copper ore), for the southern areas they might have had another destination – stone breakers (flint, of bones, cutting wood, skin processings).

Horn, antler, bone teeth and tusks are small in number and very poor. Yet, this is not a singular fact in the context of the Early Bronze Age on the territory of Romania.

Metal objects are in small number and lacking some metallographic analyses, we presume that they were made out of copper. They comprise: awls (Căzănești-Cărămidărie), chisels (Braneț), flat axes with upraised margins (*Randleistenbeile*) (Căzănești-Cărămidărie, Boișoara), axes with transversal hole (*Schaftlochaxte*), daggers (Braneț, Căzănești).

Pottery. This is the most representative material uncovered in the Glina Culture. Unfortunately, in its large majority, is in fragmentary condition, so that certain forms are rather hard to be reconstructed. The paste of the Glina pottery consisted in three categories: coarse (of common use), semi coarse and fine. The common use pottery prevailed in all Glina settlements, followed by the semi coarse one.

As concerns the forms, or ornaments repertory, as already stressed before, this is a rather restrained and limited one, being almost identical in all Glina settlements. The space we are focused on is no exception to this rule. As forms, we find: sack-vessels, jars, truncated and bitruncated vessels, globular vessels, amphorae, bowls, dishes, mugs, drinking vessels, cups etc. Their decoration is deepened, or relieved. The deepened one consisted in the well known deepened buttons, or perforations, mostly encountered on the common ware, but not only, in all settlements belonging to the Glina Culture (Braneț, Govora Sat-Runcuri, Bârsești, Gurișoara, Buleta etc.). In this technique have been also done the alveoli (like those found upon the dishes from Căzănești-Cărămidărie) and the incisions and notches on the jars from Gurișoara. Regarding the relieved ornamentation, it consisted in two small prominences, of a conical shape, isolated, or grouped in pairs, as we can find at Govora Băi, Căzănești-Cărămidărie, Arsanca, Braneț etc., simple, notched or alveolated belts, the same as fragmentary belts, (Căzănești-Cărămidărie, Gurișoara), crests, horseshoe shaped (Govora Sat-Runcuri, Braneț).

Other objects made of clay are the spinning whorls, miniature chariot wheels, weights, spoons, axes etc.

Periodisation. Chronology. Cultural connections.

In time, there were many attempts for an inner periodisation of the Glina Culture. Still, we will limit here to the periodisation of this culture inside the range that we are focused on, respectively the Lower Olt basin.

a) As already shown some time ago by Petre Roman, the material is still insufficient, despite the existence of Glina settlements with several habitation levels, among which the one from Braneţ could suggest the possibility of an inner periodisation. After the excavations from the settlement of Govora Sat-*Runcuri* the same archaeologist has discussed about a distinct evolution stage in the development of the Glina Culture – the Govora Sat-*Runcuri* stage. By the research undertaken at Ostrovul Corbului, it could be also observed that, in fact, the Glina materials discovered there were contemporary with the Máko, Nyrség, Vinkovci – Somogyvár type manifestations, in a time when the Coţofeni Culture has ceased its existence, moment that would be later than the one from Govora Sat-*Runcuri*. The fact that the materials of *Runcuri* type, with very clear Vučedol influences, in a local manner of working the pieces, therefore without imports, were not singular, is being backed up by the finds from Călina, Bârseşti (in Oltenia), but also from Valea Calului, Odaia Turcului (in Muntenia). This fact clearly shows us that we are facing a distinct phase (the 3rd) in the evolution of the Glina Culture.

The Glina settlements of the 2nd phase are included into the time span of the Coţofeni IIIb, the same like those from Braneţ, where the level belonging to the Glina Culture overlapped another one, of Coţofeni II type. Seemingly, the same situation is to be found at Găneasa, but, unfortunately, due to the missing documentation about the respective excavation, we cannot say that for sure. What we could certainly notice here is the fact that, from the same Găneasa settlement, in the repository of the County Museum Olt, we could find materials belonging to the Coţofeni II phase, that, we presume, have been overlapped by the already mentioned Glina ware. In this way, we could have another confirmation of the situation already known, that the Glina II habitations overlapped the Coţofeni II settlements, while those Glina III, final Coţofeni III ones.

The settlements of Govora Sat-*Runcuri* type chronologically correspond to Coţofeni IIIc, when the Vučedol style of decoration has expanded into the range of the Coţofeni Culture. Thus, it becomes obvious that Govora Sat-*Runcuri* type of materials are later than, for instance, those from Braneţ. Otherwise, in this stage of research, we could say that the periodisation advanced by P. Roman for the Glina Culture, comprising four stages, is the most logical one. More recently, it was also proposed a tripartite periodisation of the Glina Culture, in which 2nd and 3rd phases (Roman) should be taken as a single one, namely the classical phase, in the development of this cultural manifestation. Unfortunately, in our opinion, this attempt doesn't take into account those clear Vučedol influences observed upon the pottery from

Govora Sat-*Runcuri*, influences that conferred this ceramics a distinct aspect which is generally rather static in its evolution.

b) In the Lower Olt basin we also have a newer stage in the evolution of this cultural manifestation. We believe that this stage (2nd and 3rd phases – Roman) has began together with the initiation of the Coţofeni III phase, as resulted from the stratigraphic situation from Braneţ, where the Glina cultural layer has overlapped the Coţofeni II level, or even from Găneasa, even though, as already mentioned above, the situation there is not clear. The end of the Glina Culture in the range we are focused on is undoubtedly connected with the emergence of the Gornea – Orleşti cultural horizon, considering the fact that in the southern part of our range materials decorated with *Besenstrich* and *Textilmuster* have been discovered at Reşca-Romula – *Villa suburbana*.

c) As concerns the cultural contacts, we discussed above about the connections between the settlements of a Govora Sat-*Runcuri* type and the Coţofeni communities but, by the latter intermediation also with the Vučedol ones. Still, we will not insist upon them. Also these settlements have analogies in the Livezile group from Transylvania, by that fragment of vessel decorated with buttoned-holes.

In the settlement from Braneţ we could also detect some cultural connections with manifestations situated south of the Danube. Thus, a vessel with expanded handles from the mentioned site could find good analogies in the levels 23b-23a from Kastanas. It seems that such southern influences present in this settlement were in larger number than the usual ones.

III.3. The Gornea – Orleşti cultural group

Settlements. Generally, the settlements belonging to the cultural group of Gornea – Orleşti type, have small dimensions and do not reach altitudes higher than 250-300 m. The level corresponding to this cultural manifestation is usually thin (sometimes even of 0.10-0.15 m) fact which pointed to a short habitation. Concerning the number of this kind of settlements on the Lower Olt basin, this is rather small. We consider this fact to be a result of the recent stage of the research. Generally, in levels belonging to this cultural manifestation we find no complexes at all (dwellings, or pits).

Pottery. The most characteristic material is represented by pottery. This could be parted into two groups: 1 – the common use pottery and 2 – the fine pottery. The repertory of forms and decorations is extremely small, compared with other cultural manifestations. The most frequent vessel forms of this group are: the pot with bulging body, the short neck, a wider opening and everted rim (sometimes with band-like handles); the amphora with a strong, tubular handle, or an ear-shaped one; the jar; sack-vessels with pyriform body and a slightly averted rim; the bowl with a slightly inverted rim.

The pottery decoration is conceived by the technique of impression, or that of the relief. Regarding

the ornamentation of the pottery in the range that we refer to at the moment, it consisted in treating the walls with a layer of clay, which sometimes was sprinkled, in the technique of barbotine and using a little broom in order to obtain irregular stripes that covered the entire surface of the pot. Many vessels belonging to this category are decorated with relieved alveolar belts, applied, either directly on the rim, or right underneath. Another specific feature of the ornaments, especially when we discuss about the bowls, is the one of the perforations that penetrated the vessel mouth. The textile decoration, or in honeycomb, that, in fact, provides a special character to the habitations belonging to the settlements of the Gornea – Orlești cultural group, appeared rather seldom upon the common ware, thus becoming a characteristic of the fine pottery. This kind of ornament is usually placed at 4-5 cm beneath the rim, covering the body of the vessel up to its base. As concerns the quantitative proportions between the group of common and fine pottery, we could say that the common one prevailed.

IV. Discussions regarding the end of the Early Bronze Age on the Lower Olt basin

Before we could analyze the finds belonging to the Gornea – Orlești cultural group on the Lower Olt basin, there is something we need to point out. The aspects concerning the last stage of the Early Bronze Age in the space we are analyzing is just starting to get outlined. It is enough to back up our position even by emphasizing once again the fact that the number of finds belonging to this chronological sequence is extremely low, while the aspects connected with the beginning and end of the respective stage are still obscure.

When the evolution of the Early Bronze Age II (EBA II) ends and begins another phase in this geographical space, which is Early Bronze Age III (EBA III), it is hard to say precisely in this moment. It is possible that the border, of course a conventional one, could be identified in those ceramic fragments that are decorated with the technique called “*Besenstrichverzierungen*” but which have also those perforations beneath the rim of the vessel, thus, a horizon more early tied with the Glina Culture, that preceded the manifestations of Gornea – Orlești type. Yet, besides these aspects, which could be a possible solution to the mentioned problem, due to the lack of stratigraphic observations that would enable us to establish more precisely the relation between those two stages of the Early Bronze Age, it is hard to draw any conclusions. At Locusteni we could notice the presence of a footed vessel, decorated with “sunken” dots (by the published drawing we could not realize what was the shape of those impressions). Out of the analogies we could make for its shape (specific to the Nagyrév and Hatvan Cultures), but also for its

decoration – we should mention here just the fragment from *Țebea-Ruști* with an ornamentation consisting in triangular impressions that has correspondences concerning the motifs in finds of Sanislău type – enabled us to infer a parallel existing with this up mentioned group.

Trying to introduce the materials rendered above in a more restrained chronological-cultural background, thus, closer to the archaeological realities, we are forced to become tributaries to the recent stage of research, in the space that we are dealing with.

The only element that could suggest us a possible succession of the Early Bronze Age vestiges is the pottery. As the shapes of the receptacles are hard to reconstruct, in most of the cases, the main leading thread is the ceramic decoration. Even if this criterium has been used for a large number of finds belonging to the Early Bronze Age, the first attempt has belonged to Petre Roman when discussing the notion of “Nyrség group”. Even if this enterprise has been subsequently expanded, for the area that we are dealing with we do not have such a functional system. In fact, this would be hard to do (even impossible), in the recent stage of research in the Lower Olt basin, due to the fact that just part of the materials are published and most of them have been discovered in surveys, thus, without any clear stratigraphical observations.

Culturally speaking, the finds are being connected with manifestations that in recent time are facing new definitions and content nuances. In our opinion, these materials, together with those known as “Iernut type finds” – therefore coming from Central and South-Western Transylvania, together with those from Zoltan, but excepting maybe some of the discoveries from north-western Romania, should be brought together under the denomination of Gornea – Orlești Cultural Group, in fact being rather uniform upon the entire distribution range. We believe that the materials of Bungetu type could not be assigned to this cultural phenomenon, in fact, being the first manifestations of the Tei Culture, implicitly of the Middle Bronze Age. The discovery of a settlement of Gornea – Orlești type (with pottery decorated with stripes and textile imprints, or shaped as a honeycomb) at Stoicănești, Olt County, on the left bank of the Olt river, could represent an argument in the sense of a common origin of the Tei and Verbicioara cultures, upon a Gornea – Orlești population stock.

This cultural horizon, by its connections with Central Europe, could possibly illustrate the penetration of a population wave coming from the west. The moment when the last stage of the Early Bronze Age has ended in the Lower Olt basin is surely marked by the emergence of the Verbicioara Culture.

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