ORHEIUL VECHI
REZERVAȚIA CULTURAL-NATURALĂ

Institutul
de Cercetări
Bioarheologice
și Etnoculturale

Revista

de Arheologie, Antropologie și Studii interdisciplinare

Journal of Archaeology, Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Studies

3
2021

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Revista de Arheologie, Antropologie și Studii Interdisciplinare (RAASI) este publicația anuală a Institutului de Cercetări Bioarheologice și Etnoculturale (ICBE) din Chișinău.

Revista de Arheologie, Antropologie și Studii Interdisciplinare (RAASI) este indexată începând cu anul 2020 în baza de date internațională CEEOL.

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Editare și tipar: Bons Offices
ISSN 2587-3768
E-ISSN 2587-3776
Chișinău 2021

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A Middle Bronze Age pit at Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda – *Fodor-Kert* (Harghita county, Romania)

József Puskás[1]*, Lóránt Darvas[2]*

Abstract. In 2016, during a rescue excavation on the territory of the city Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda, seven features were discovered. Four of them were small post holes, without any archaeological finds. Two other belonged to the Migration Period (Sântana de Mureș-Chernjakhov culture) and one to the Middle Bronze Age. The present paper discusses this latter feature. The archaeological material consists of pottery fragments, belonging to the end of the II/B or to the III/C phase of Wietenberg culture. The most interesting discovery is a richly decorated fragment of a clay wagon model. Based on analogies, it is possible that we are in front of a deliberate destruction in four pieces. A possible explanation is the breaking of the object during a ritual activity.
Keywords: Middle Bronze Age, south-eastern Transylvania, Wietenberg culture, clay wagon model, *Besenstrich* technique.

O groapă din perioada mijlocie a epocii bronzului de la Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda – Fodor-Kert (județul Harghita, România). În anul 2016, în urma unei cercetări arheologice preventive efectuate pe teritoriul orașului Miercurea Ciuc, au fost dezvelite șapte complexe de diferite dimensiuni. Patru dintre acestea erau gropi de par de mici dimensiuni, fără material arheologic. Alte două aparțineau perioadei migrațiilor (cultura Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov), iar una epocii bronzului mijlociu. Articolul de față discută descoperirile din acest ultim complex. Materialul descoperit este format din ceramică și cel mai probabil aparține sfârșitului fazei II/B sau fazei III/C a culturii Wietenberg. Un fragment ceramic aparținând unui cărucior de lut miniatural, bogat ornamentat, constituie o descoperire importantă și ar putea sugera o distrugere intenționată.
Cuvinte cheie: epoca bronzului mijlociu, sud-estul Transilvaniei, cultura Wietenberg, cărucior de lut, tehnica *Besenstrich*.

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Introduction

The city of Miercurea Ciuc (in Hungarian Csíkszereda) is located in the Ciuc Depression, Harghita County, Romania. The Middle Bronze Age (MBA) period of this region is mostly known from the excavations at Păuleni-Ciuc, *Dealul Cetății* (Hungarian: Csíkpálfalva-*Várdomb*) (Cavruc, Rotea 2000, p. 155-172; Cavruc, Dumitroaia 2000, p. 131-154; Cavruc 2001; Cavruc, Buzea 2002, p. 41-88), as well as from several chance finds, small test trenches carried out in the nearby territory (János, Kovács 1967, p. 43-52; Daróczi 2013, p. 35-94).

In recent years several new excavations have been conducted, mostly in Migration Period (3rd -6th centuries AD) and Medieval sites (Darvas 2012, p. 59-104; Botár 2012, p. 234-236; Botár 2019, p. 253-619, with further literature)[3], but during these researches a few prehistoric features have also been discovered.

The *Fodor-kert* site is located in the north-eastern part of the city Miercurea Ciuc[4], on the right bank of the Șumuleu Brook (Hungarian: Somlyó-patak), on the slope of a hill in the vicinity of the Cioboteni (Hungarian: Csíkcsobotfalva) Roman-Catholic church. At the site the first archaeological test units were made in the 1950s, since then only field surveys have been conducted until recently. These surveys have delineated the site, and have identified traces of settlements from different periods: Middle and Late Bronze Age (MBA and LBA, respectively), Migration and Medieval Periods (Janovits 1999, p. 121-150).

Starting with 2005, several rescue excavations have been made in the area (Botár 2012, p. 234-236; 2014, p. 31-32). It was thus in 2016 that the area was investigated before the construction of one of the buildings of the Várdomb guest house. During this research seven archaeological features were identified, two belonging to the Migration Period – Sântana de Mureș-Chernjakhov culture, one to the MBA – Wietenberg culture, and four were small post holes of unknown period, without any archaeological material. This paper will discuss the discoveries belonging to the MBA.

[3] The only exception is the fortified settlement from the Păuleni-Ciuc-*Dealul Cetății* site, which first was investigated in the late 1950s by Zoltán Székely. From 1999 until present the fortified settlement has been excavated by a team led by Valerii Kavruk.

[4] The site is located on the territory of the former Șumuleu-Ciuc (Hungarian: Csíksomlyó) village, today a district of the city Miercurea-Ciuc.

Description of the excavations and features[5]

Cx 1. A circular post hole with vertical margin and straight bottom. The outline of the feature showed up at -0.35 m from the modern ground level. The filling consisted of black soil with yellow clay pigments. No archaeological material in the filling. Dimensions: d – 0.45 m, dp – 0.27 m[6].

Cx 2. A circular post hole with vertical margin and straight bottom. The outline of the feature showed up at -0.35 m from the modern ground level. The filling consisted of black soil with yellow clay pigments. No archaeological material in the filling. Dimensions: d – 0.25 m, dp – 0.20 m.

Cx 3. A circular post hole with vertical margin and straight bottom. The outline of the feature showed up at -0.35 m from the modern ground level. The filling consisted of black soil with yellow clay pigments. No archaeological material in the filling. This feature was superimposed by G4. Dimensions: d – 0.35 m, dp – 0.25 m.

Cx 4. A roughly rectangular post hole with rounded corners, with vertical margin and straight bottom. The outline of the feature showed up at -0.35 m from the modern ground level. No archaeological material in the filling. This feature was in superposition with G3. Dimensions: 0.40 x 0.30 m, dp – 0.20 m.

Cx 5. A circular shallow pit with oblique margin and straight bottom. The outline of the feature showed up at -0.35 m from the modern ground level. The filling consisted of black soil with yellow clay pigments. The pottery discovered in the filling belongs entirely to the MBA Wietenberg culture. Dimensions: d – 1.38 m, dp – 0.20 m.

Cx 6. An oval pit, with vertical margins, rounded corner and straight bottom. The outline of the feature became visible at -0.35 m from the modern ground level. The filling consisted of black soil with yellow clay pigments. A few pottery sherds discovered in the fill belong entirely to the Migration Period, Sântana de Mureș-Chernjachov culture. Dimensions: d – 1.44 m, dp – 0.72 m.

Cx 7. A circular shallow pit with oblique margins and flat bottom. The outline of the feature became visible at -0.35 m from the modern ground level. The filling was composed of black soil with yellow clay pigment and large clay lumps at the bottom, near the edges. These belong to the collapsed upper part of a beehive-type pit, with a narrow opening and a widening bottom. A few pottery sherds discovered in the fill belong entirely to the Migration Period, Sântana de Mureș-Chernjachov culture. Dimensions: d – 2.20 m, dp – 1.42 m.

[5] Of the seven features, marked with "Cx", only three could be dated to a specific period. Four small pits were without any archaeological material. They could belong to the Migration Period or to the MBA as well. We considered it relevant to describe them as well to have a complete presentation of the features we have also included the later pits.

[6] Abbreviations used in the text: d – diameter; dp – depth (from the level of appearance); drim – rim diameter; dmax – maximum diameter; dbas – base diameter.

Description of the MBA material

In the pit belonging to the MBA (Cx 5) were discovered a total of 162 artefacts, mostly consisting of handmade ceramic fragments from different vessels (153 pcs.), three daub fragments with smoothed surface, one fragment of a rectangular recipient with incised decoration, one knapped stone and three bone fragments.

Ceramics

Of the 153 sherds of ceramic, 84 are atypical body fragments of which 50 pieces are from large, coarse pots, tempered with sand, burnt mostly in light-brown colour, a few sherds having dark-grey surface. Some fragments are covered with combed or brushed incisions. The category of fine pottery includes 21 fragments of light-brown colour with smoothed surface, unevenly burnt, without any decoration. Another 13 fragments are of dark-grey or black colour and probably belong to one or more of the typologically identifiable vessels (either cups or lobed bowls).

The category of *pots* is represented by two vessels. The first is a large sized pot, consisting of 46 fragments. It was made from a coarse paste, with coarse surface, burnt brown, and has a slightly inverted rim (TA1c type)[7]. The straight rim was decorated with finger impressions, just like the horizontal, finger-impressed rib located under the rim (VE2). Here and there the rib is interrupted by knobs. The upper part of the interior surface and the outer surface under the rib were decorated with a brush stroke (*Besenstrich* technique – VD1). Dimensions: drim – 32 cm, dmax – 38 cm (**Pl. 6/1**).

The second pot has only its upper part preserved. It has a straight, rounded, slightly everted rim, with smoothed dark-grey outer surface, without decoration, with the maximum diameter at the shoulder of the vessel (TA4c). Strip-handles (probably two) were attached under the rim. Dimension: drim – 12 cm (**Pl. 5/4**).

Three fragments from the same mug or small pot belong to the TC1b type. This type is known from the upper layers from Derşida and was assigned to the Wietenberg B-C phases (Boroffka 1994, p. 250). Dimension: drim – 14 cm (**Pl. 5/5**).

In the filling of the pit five fragments of three different bowl types were found. The first piece belongs to a deep bowl, from which one fragment was found. It has an everted, straight rim, with smoothed dark-grey outer surface, without decoration (TD3f). Dimension: drim – 18.5 cm (**Pl. 7/1**). The second vessel is a shallow bowl (possibly a dish), with a rounded rim, smoothed, grey surface, with traces of secondary burning, without decoration (TF1a – **Pl. 6/2**). Three other

[7] For the vessel forms and decoration motifs we used the typology created by N. Boroffka (Boroffka 1994, p. 119-194, Typentafel 1-29).

fragments belong to the so-called lobed bowls. All of them were made of coarse paste, with smoothed surface. Two were burnt to a dark-grey colour (TE1a – **Pl. 7/2**), while the other is light-brown (TE1c – **Pl. 7/3**). None has any decoration. Dimensions of the latter vessel: dmax – 35.5 cm, dbas – 9 cm.

Cups are represented by three fragments. All of them are made of fine paste, with smoothed surface. The first was burnt to a dark-grey colour, has slightly everted rim (TD3h or TD3g?), the body being decorated with wide, oblique grooves (VA12). Dimension: drim – 14 cm (**Pl. 5/1**). A second cup was also burnt to a grey colour, bearing traces of secondary firing, with a slightly everted rim (TD3h or TD3g?) and the body decorated with wide, oblique grooves (VA12). Dimensions: drim – 12 cm (**Pl. 5/2**). A third cup has a straight, rounded rim (TD2a), burnt to a dark-grey colour, the body decorated with oblique, distanced grooves (VA10). Dimensions: drim – 11 cm (**Pl. 5/3**).

Special object

One of the most interesting artefacts discovered in the pit was a fragment of a rectangular ceramic object, richly decorated. Made of fine paste with smoothed surface, burnt to a grey colour, it has secondary burning marks on the inner surface and the rim. The upper and lateral edges were decorated with crosshatching (VD4). Along the edges parallel lines and small impressed dots are visible (VD5). The sides were decorated with crosshatched, lying rhomboidal motif (VD20). The ornamentation was executed by thin incisions, filled with white material, giving an outstanding contrast on the dark background. The upper part of the corner is broken (**Pl. 8**). The vertical edge of the fragment is slightly curved outward, which suggest the existence of a raised knob on the corners or a pair of protomes on one side.

Plaster fragments

From the pit three small fragments of burnt clay plaster were recovered. Each has one side smoothed. Probably these were parts of a wattle-and-daub wall or a fireplace.

Stone object

In the filling of the pit a stone fragment with sharp edges was discovered. This kind of object is common on Bronze Age sites, still it is not certain that it can be considered to have been a tool since there are no visible wear or retouching marks (**Pl. 7/4**).

Discussion

The evolution of Wietenberg-type pottery is mostly based on the results of the excavations from Derşida (Chidioşan 1980, p. 27-84; Boroffka 1994, p. 246-251). Also recently the results from the Rotbav–*La pârâuț* site have been published, but the stratigraphy there is not as complex as at Derşida. Even so, being the only site in south-eastern Transylvania that has been properly published with stratigraphical data, it is essential for understanding the local chronology of the MBA (Dietrich 2014a, p. 157-187).

At Derşida five layers were distinguished, representing three periods of evolution of the Wietenberg culture. N. Chidioşan assigned the first (lowest) layer to the 1st (I), the second and third layers to the 2nd (II), while the fourth and fifth layers to the 3rd (III) phases of evolution (Chidioşan 1980, p. 69-77). In his monography discussing the Wietenberg culture, N. Boroffka retained the quadripartite division (A-D), but the three lower layers were assigned to different phases of evolution. To phase A were assigned the two lower layers, divided into two subphases: subphase A1 (first, lowest layer), subphase A2 (second layer). The second phase (B) of evolution was represented by the 3rd layer. Based on these Chidioşan's phase I is parallel with Boroffka's A1 phase, while phase II with the A2-B respectively. The fourth and fifth layers represent evolutionary periods III or C (Boroffka 1994, p. 248-250).

During the excavations at Rotbav, six habitation layers could be separated. The first three (lower) layers belong to the MBA Wietenberg culture. The layers were denoted as Phases 1-3, the lowest belonging to Phase 1. The analysis of the archaeological material has made possible a calibration with the existing periodization of the culture. Accordingly, the "Phase 1" is parallel with Chidioşan's I, equalling Boroffka's phase A (Dietrich 2014a, p. 160). The material from the second layer (Phase 2) shows similarities with phase II, or periods A2-B (Dietrich 2014a, p. 171), while the third layer (Phase 3) with phases III or C (Dietrich 2014a, p. 182). Recently G. Bălan, C. P. Quinn and G. Hodgins have discussed the internal chronology of the Wietenberg culture. In their opinion the lowest layer at Derşida also belongs to phase II/A2-B of the culture. The authors have suggested a tripartite division for the culture in Early, Classical and Late phase. (Table 1, Bălan *et alii* 2016a, p. 67-92).

Comparing the typo-chronology of the two sites, some controversial dating can be seen in the vessel forms and decorative motifs. For example, in Boroffka's typology vessel type TA4h belongs to the last phase (D) of the culture (Boroffka 1994, p. 251)[8], while at Rotbav a similar vessel fragment (similar to Dietrich's B26b

[8] This vessel form is mentioned only for phase IV/D, which was decorated in *breitem Absatzstich* technique, also typical for this period.

Derşida			Rotbav		
Layer	Chidioşan 1980	Boroffka 1994	Layer	Dietrich 2014	Bălan et alii 2016
–	IV.	D	–	–	Late Wietenberg Phase
5.	III.	C	3.	Phase III	Classical Wietenberg Phase
4.					
3.	II.	B	2.	Phase II	Early Wietenberg Phase
2.		A2			
1.	I.	A1	1.	Phase I	

Table 1. Comparative table of the main chronological systems of Wietenberg culture
Tab. 1. Tabel comparativ al principalelor sisteme cronologice ale culturii Wietenberg

type) was discovered only in the lowest layer (Phase 1 – Dietrich 2014a, p. 73). N. Boroffka has drawn attention to the pitfalls of the Derşida-based chronology. Being at the periphery of the distribution area of the Wietenberg culture, the site could be problematic to use as a model for the whole area (Boroffka 1994, p. 246-248). The chronology built upon the observations at Rotbav could also be problematic for similar reasons when used to date material from more distant regions such as central or western Transylvania.

Many scholars have confronted the chronology of the Wietenberg culture. In earlier studies the inner chronology of the culture was based on typological and stratigraphical observations (Horedt 1960, p. 107-137; Chidioşan 1980; Andriţoiu 1992; Boroffka 1994). Recently in newer works these ceramic-based chronologies have been associated with sets of radiocarbon dating (Dietrich 2014a; 2014b, p. 59-70; Ciugudean, Quinn 2015, p. 147-178; Bălan *et alii* 2016a, p. 67-92), some challenging the correctness of this chronology (Quinn *et alii* 2020, p. 44-61). Taking into consideration these results, we can make some typo-chronological observations on the material discovered at Miercurea Ciuc.

According to Boroffka, TA1c-type vessels and finger-impressed ribs are present in all phases of evolution, unlike the decoration covering the surface of the type vessel, which mainly occur in the first and last two layers at Derşida (Wietenberg phases A and C – Boroffka 1994, p. 249). Similar observations were made at Rotbav, where the B11d-type vessels were found in all layers (Dietrich 2014a, p. 60), but here the *Besenstrich* technique was not documented in the MBA layers. In south-western Transylvania, Wietenberg pottery decorated with *Besenstrich* is not frequent, since only a few sherds have been associated with the Wietenberg period B (Andriţoiu 1992, p. 51).

The *Besenstrich* technique is more frequent in the Early Bronze Age (Cavruc 1997, p. 97-133; Popa 2010, p. 82-106, with further literature; Daróczi, Ursuțiu 2015, p. 4; Gogâltan 2015, p. 69) and Late Bronze Age (Florescu, Florescu 1990, p. 65; Ciugudean 2010, p. 164; Popa, Totoianu 2010, p. 213). During the Middle Bronze Age, in the area of Wietenberg culture the presence of pottery with *Besenstrich* is rarely documented, but is sporadically present throughout its evolution (Popa 2010, p. 129-130, with further literature, Bălan 2014, 78, Pl. 22/3). Probably the appearance of the *Besenstrich* technique on some of the early Wietenberg pottery may be assigned to EBA tradition (Horedt 1967, p. 139; Vulpe 2010, p. 251; Popa 2010, p. 129-134), having continued to be used (on a much smaller scale) in later periods as well. The only vessel fragment with *Besenstrich* on both the outer and inner surface, similar to the one at Miercurea Ciuc, was found at Ciceu-Corabia (Boroffka 1994, Taf. 52/12). During the MBA this technique could also be borrowed from the Suciu de Sus culture, where it occurs often (Bader 1978, p. 72; Kacsó 1987, p. 66).

From south-eastern Transylvania, it is worth mentioning the ceramic fragments decorated with *Besenstrich* from the cemetery at Turia/Torja–*Vármegye*, from Grave nr. 20 (Székely 1995, 145, Pl. IX/5), which belong to the early phase (A1? or A2-B) of the Wietenberg culture. Recently a radiocarbon dating was made for Grave nr. 19 (DeA-23493), which has given a 3556 ± 30 BP result. The calibrated data has given a 68.2% probability for a dating between 1948 and 1826 cal BC, which corresponds to a 95.4% probability for a dating between 2016 and 1773 cal BC (see **Fig. 1**). Some of the pottery fragments with *Besenstrich* discovered at Păuleni/Csíkpálfalva–*Várdomb* (Cavruc, Buzea 2002, 77, Pl. XXII/8, 9) have also been assigned to the Wietenberg culture. In our opinion, those fragments could also be EBA (Ciomortan?) fragments in a secondary position in a MBA feature.

The presence of *Besenstrich* technique on LBA Noua pottery has been considered to be of foreign (Srubno-Hvalinsk) influence (Florescu, Florescu 1990, p. 65; Popa, Totoianu 2010, p. 213). In south-eastern Transylvania ceramic fragments with *Besenstrich* on the outer surface on Noua pottery occur frequently (Puskás 2017, p. 37, Pl. XII/6, p. 49, Pl. XXIV/3; Puskás 2020, p. 139, Pl. 2/7, p. 141, Pl. 4/7, p. 145, Pl. 8/4, 8, p. 147, Pl. 10/7). This technique could be brought from earlier Wietenberg communities, but more likely it was already in use when Noua communities appeared in Transylvania.

The TA4c vessels are a common type of the Wietenberg culture. Even though Boroffka considered that this type mostly appears in the first and second phases of evolution (Boroffka 1994, p. 247, 249), from the cemetery at Luduș, dated to the Wietenberg phases C-D, this type of vessel occurs frequently (Berecki 2016, 82,

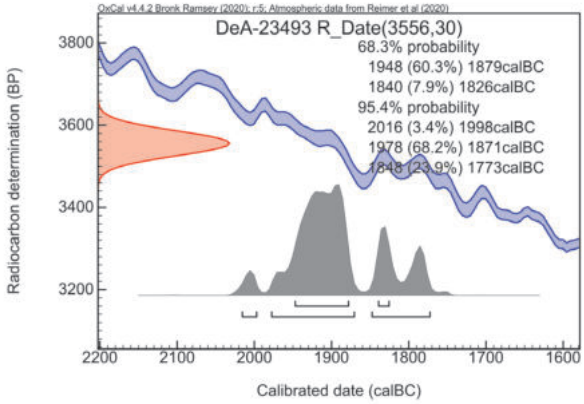


Fig. 1. Calibrated radiocarbon data of the Grave 19 at Turia-*Vármegye* cemetery
Fig. 1. Data calibrată radiocarbon a mormântului 19 din cimitirul Turia- *Vármegye*

p. 142). In the typology elaborated by Laura Dietrich this vessel form is the B16a type. Several fragments have been found in all the three layers belonging to the Wietenberg culture (Dietrich 2014a, p. 65).

The TD2a type cups/bowls appear in the 2nd and 3rd layers at Derșida, belonging to Wietenberg phase A2-B (Boroffka 1994, p. 247-249; Chidioșan 1980, p. 38). In south-western Transylvania similar vessels have been attributed to Wietenberg periods B-C (Andrițoiu 1992, p. 38). At Rotbav a similar cup was discovered in the second layer (Dietrich 2014a, Tafel 5/14). The oblique, narrow grooves were used widely all along the evolution of the culture, being a common decorative element of Wietenberg pottery (Boroffka 1994, p. 247-249; Dietrich 2014a, p. 101, AI24).

The TD3h-type bowls/cups appear at Derșida only in the three upper layers, so they were assigned to periods B and C (Boroffka 1994, p. 250). The oblique groove decoration is a common element of the culture, having been documented in all five layers at Derșida, with a higher concentration in the upper layers (phase C – Boroffka 1994, p. 249-250).

The TD3f-type bowls are known mostly from the middle layers at Derșida, but some were also found at sites of period D, having been decorated with the *breitem Absatzstich* technique (Boroffka 1994, p. 247, 251).

The bowls with four lobes are a characteristic form of the Wietenberg culture. Boroffka distinguished seven variants (Boroffka 1994, p. 154-158). The two most common forms are the TE1a and the TE1c variants, which were documented at Miercurea Ciuc–*Fodor-kert*. The TE1a-type vessels are present in the middle layers (2-4) at Derșida, with a higher number in the lower layers (2-3) (Boroffka 1994,

p. 247, 249-250). At Rotbav (Dietrich B5c type) they appear in the 1st and 2nd phases (Dietrich 2014a, p. 54). One of the most common forms is the TE1c type, which at Derșida first occurs in the third layer, and remains present until the end of the settlement (Wietenberg B-C – Boroffka 1994, p. 250). Some of them are richly decorated, but examples without decoration also occur. This type of lobed bowl was not documented at Rotbav.

The only shallow bowl discovered in the pit was a TF1a variant. Both at Derșida and Rotbav (Dietrich type B9b) they occur in all the layers, with no chronological value (Boroffka 1994, p. 249; Dietrich 2014a, p. 56).

The rectangular ceramic fragment could be part of a miniature clay wagon. Until now, except for the example at Miercurea Ciuc, we know about six other fragments of this type. The edge of a clay wagon model (rim, body and base fragment) was discovered at Stolna-*Podurile Domnești*, in a pit dated to the Late Bronze Age IIa. The decoration is characteristic for Wietenberg period C. Probably it was deposited in the pit in a secondary position and is not "the continuity of earlier, MBA traditions", as stated by the authors (Daróczi, Ursuțiu 2015, p. 88, 182, nr. 3172, Pl. 166/3172)[9]. Another similar discovery was made at Aiud-*Groapa de gunoi*. Roughly one-quarter of a wagon model was found, decorated in *Zahnstempelung* technique (Bălan *et alii* 2016b, p. 76, Pl. 20/6). The archaeological material was dated to the Wietenberg period III/C (Bălan *et alii* 2016b, p. 49-51). At Sighișoara-*Wietenberg* a fragment from a rectangular clay cart is known, and presents two perforations at the corner (Horedt, Seraphin 1971, Abb. 39/16). At the site Baraolt/Barót-*Csatorna*, István Dénes collected ceramics belonging to the Wietenberg culture. Aside from numerous vessel fragments, a few clay objects were also found: two fragments from clay wheels, one pintadera and two fragments from rectangular objects. One has two perforations at the corner, while the other is without holes. The ceramic fragments discovered here probably belong to the 2nd or (more likely) to the 3rd phase of evolution of Wietenberg culture. A similar fragment from the Racoș/Alsórákos-*Durdulya* site can be dated to the Wietenberg period C[10]. The authors of an article discussing similar finds from the aforementioned site and the neighbouring area consider these rectangular objects to have been home-altars (Costea, Székely 2011, p. 107-113).

[9] In LBA IIa period the evolution of the Wietenberg culture has ceased (Daróczi–Ursuțiu 2015, p. 6, Pl. I), not to mention the Zahnstempelung technique. This decoration technique was in use only in the MBA III (Wietenberg C), or perhaps a little later, at the very beginning of the LBA (LBA I – Wietenberg D) (Quinn *et alii* 2020, p. 53-57).

[10] The fragments from Baraolt and Racoș will be presented in detail in a separate article dedicated to the memory of István Dénes. The objects are part of the collection of the Szekler National Museum from Sfântu Gheorghe, Covasna County, Romania.

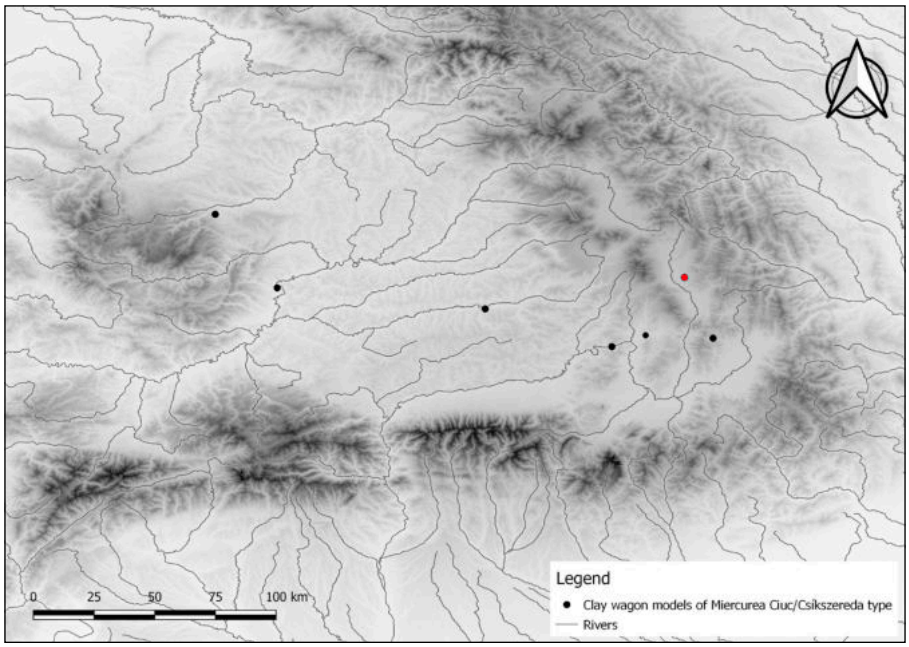


Fig. 2. Distribution of the clay wagon models similar to the one at Miercurea Ciuc in the area of Wietenberg culture. Red dot marks the site at Miercurea Ciuc
Fig. 2. Distribuția modelelor de cărucioare de lut în zona culturii Wietenberg asemănătoare celui de la Miercurea Ciuc. Punctul roșu marchează situl de la Miercurea Ciuc

During the excavation at Turia/Torja-*Torjavára*, the edge of a rectangular "vessel" was discovered, with one perforation preserved (Székely 1999, p. 126). The object was decorated with *Zahnstempelung* technique. The entire material can be attributed to the Wietenberg period C (Székely 1999, p. 111). As presented above, most of wagon models similar to the one at Miercurea Ciuc have been attributed to the Wietenberg period C. Another argument for this dating could be the decoration technique, namely filling the geometric incisions and circular impressions with white paste (Andrițoiu 1992, p. 52)[11].

Most of the scholars consider similar finds to have been part of clay wagon models[12], or, more rarely, some consider them to have been home-altars, opinions

[11] At Rotbav in all three Wietenberg layers ceramic fragments with incrustation were present, but in much higher quantity in the 3rd level (Dietrich 2014a, p. 117, Abb. V.39, p. 180).

[12] In 2006 A.-D. Popescu made a classification of clay wagon models discovered in Romania and eastern Hungary (Popescu 2006, 113-128). In her opinion wagon models are objects which have elements (thickened knob) indicating possible fixation of wheels or axes (Popescu 2006, p. 120). She does not discuss objects similar to the one at Miercurea Ciuc. See also Bondár 2012, p. 28.

which are not incompatible. Many of the objects have secondary burning marks. The majority of the wagon models found in the Carpathian Basin have a perforated thickened knob at the lower part of the base, where the axles, probably made of wooden sticks, could be inserted. Another solution (such as the one used on our wagon model) could be a double perforation at the inner corner of the clay cart, where the axles could be attached by rope, string (Boroffka 1994, p. 167). The existence of knobs or a pair of protomes is suggested by the curved edge of the fragment. A very similar wagon model was discovered at Lechința de Mureș (Bichir 1964, p. 71, Fig. 4/3). Not far from the *Fodor-kert* site, at Jigodin/Csíkzsögöd, a protome was discovered, which was considered to have belonged to a wagon model (Székely 1959, p. 242, Fig. 2; Bondár 2012, p. 85-86).

For their function two main hypotheses have emerged, based on the contexts of the finds. They could have been used in rituals or as votive offerings, but also some could have been used as toys (Schuster 1996, p. 121; Boroffka 2004, p. 352-354; Schuster 2007, p. 32; Molnár, Katócz 2019, 5, 19, footnote 143).

In many cases only a quarter fragment of the clay wagon model was found, from the edge of the object. It is hard to say if this is a coincidence or the result of deliberate breaking. During the Bronze Age many cases of a deliberate destruction of different objects has been documented, as part of a ritual (Popescu 2010, p. 213-227). In this case the function of the pit is difficult to determine. It could be a refuse pit, with household trash. The pit does not show any particularity of ritual pits discovered in the area of the Wietenberg culture (Rotea, Wittenberger 1999, p. 7-27; Rotea *et alii* 2007, p. 63-92). There are no whole vessels or special objects, except the fragment of the clay wagon, which could be a broken toy or waste from a household.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper has been to present a group of material belonging to the MBA (Wietenberg culture), discovered on the territory of Miercurea Ciuc city. Even though the feature presented and its contents are not especially spectacular, the lack of well documented and published MBA features from the Ciuc Depression make it a new contribution to the understanding of this period in the area.

Based on the pottery typology and its ornamentation known for Wietenberg culture, we may assume that the pit and the archaeological material belongs to an advanced period of evolution, very likely to the end of the 2nd or the 3rd phase of the culture (Wietenberg periods B-C which correspond to the MBA periods II-III). The vessel types found in the filling of the pit may be the remains of household waste, so the feature can be interpreted as a probable refuse pit. This seems likely because none of the vessels could be pieced together: all were discovered in a fragmentary state.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank to Robin P. Symonds for the English revision of the paper and for his useful advice. The radiocarbon measurement was made possible thanks to a grant provided by the Ministry of Human Resources of Hungary.

Title of the project: "Csontba zárt idő. Adatok Háromszék középső bronzkori kronológiájához" (ID: NTP-NFTÖ-19-B-0126).

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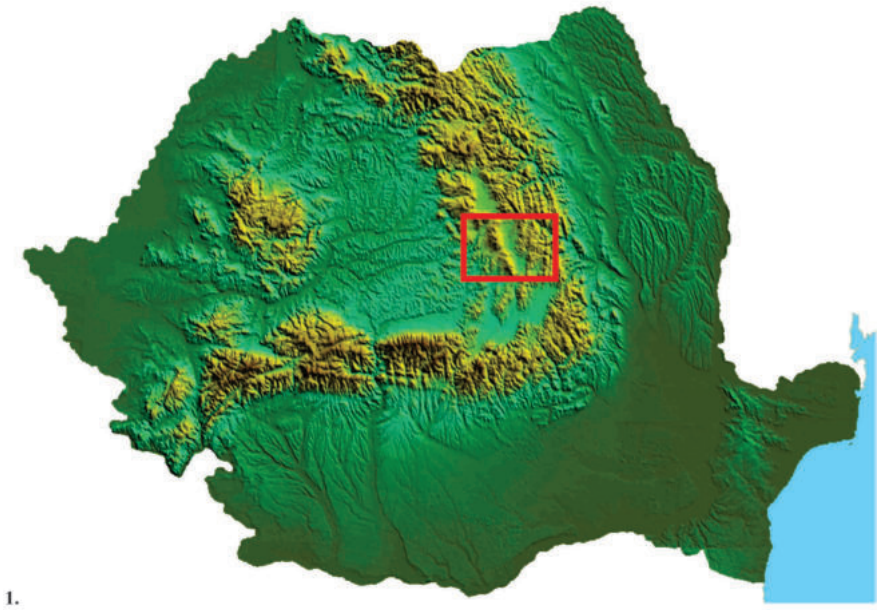
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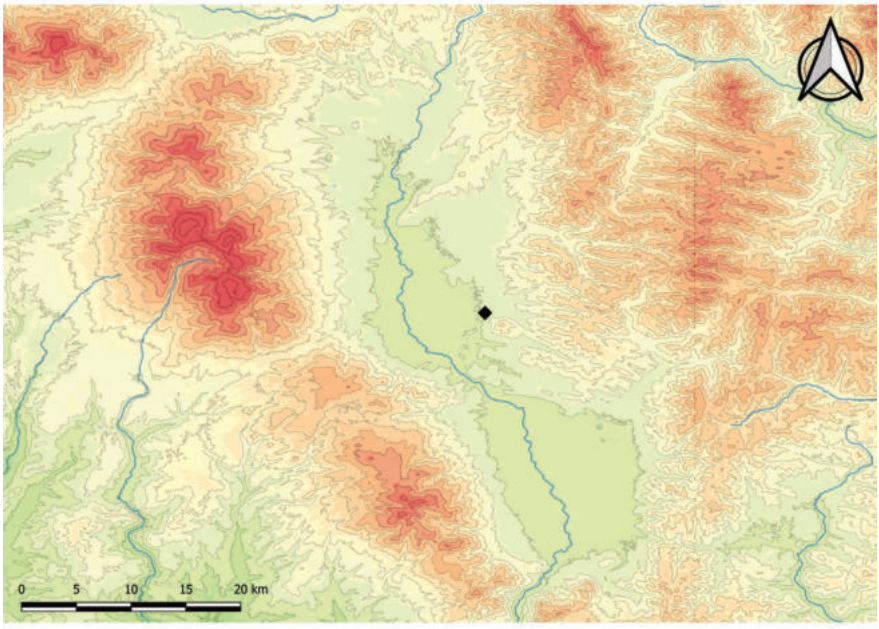
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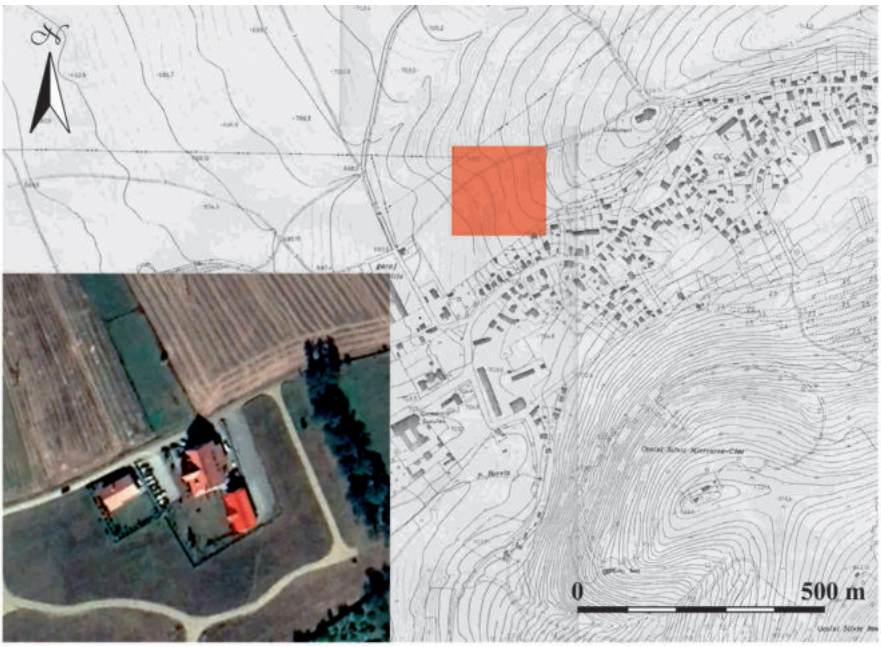


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2.

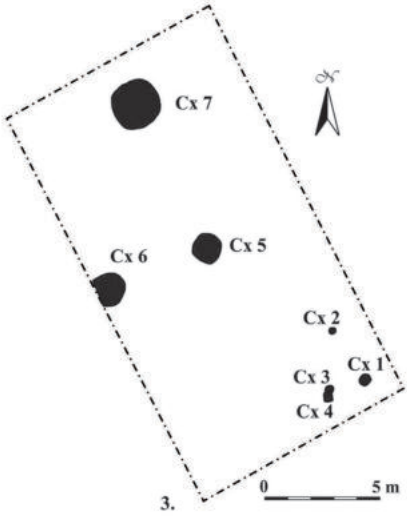
Pl. 1. Location of the Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda – *Fodor-kert* site in Romania (1) and the Ciuc Depression (2)
Pl. 1. Amplasarea sitului Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda – Fodor-kert în România (1) și Depresiunea Ciucului (2)



1.

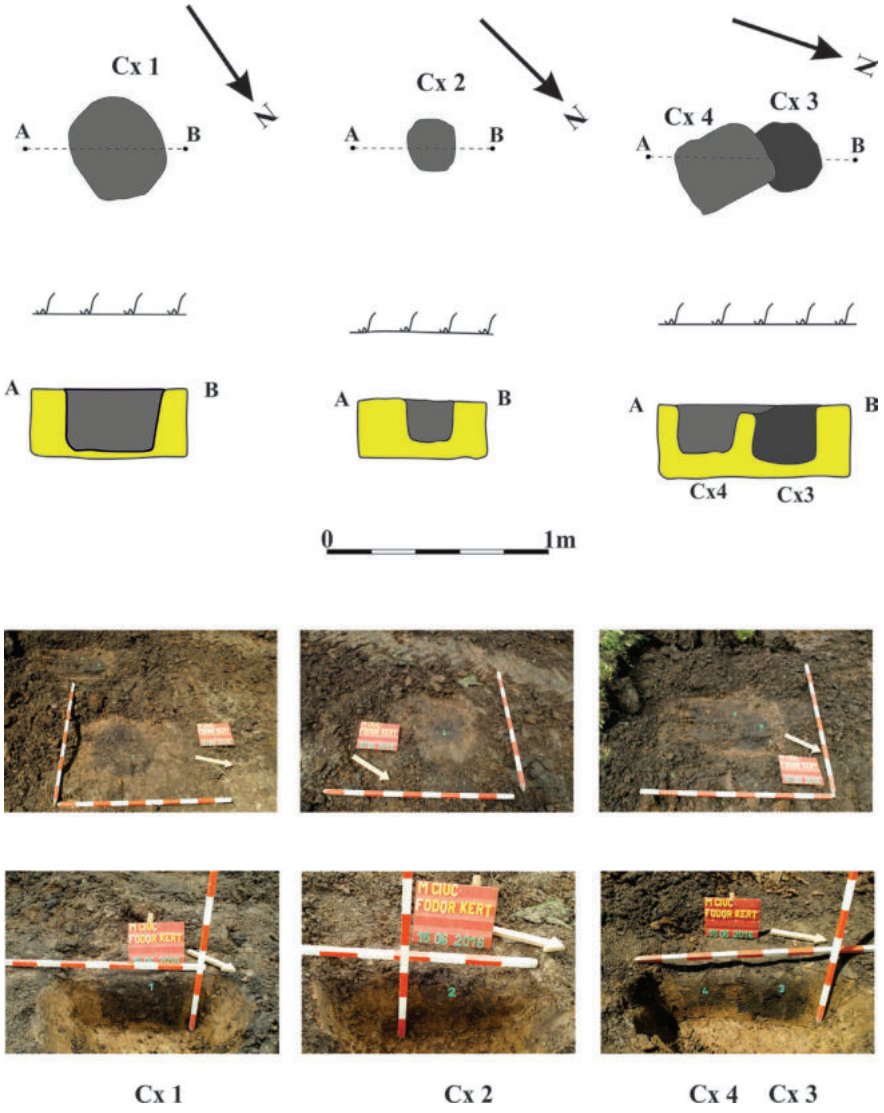


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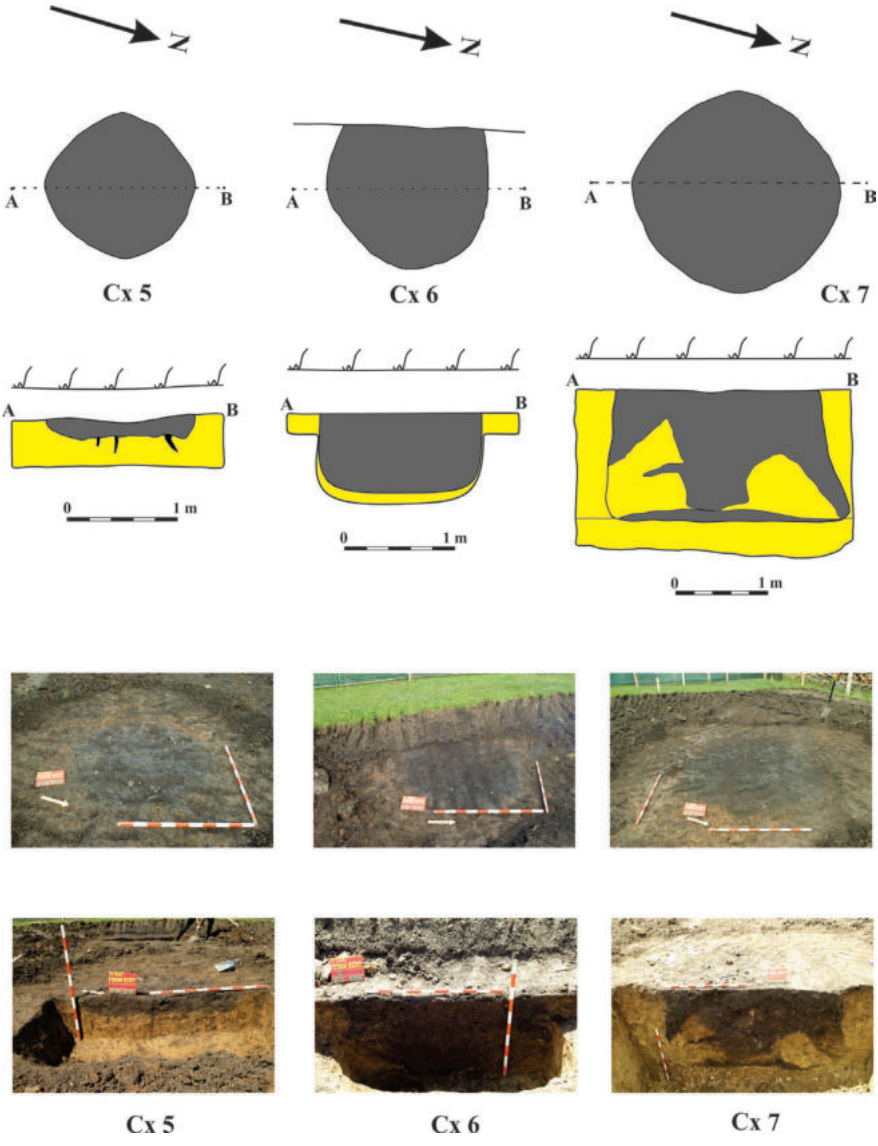
3.

Pl. 2. Surrounding of the Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda – *Fodor-kert* site (1) and the plan of excavations (2-3)
Pl. 2. Împrejurimile sitului Miercurea Ciuc/Csíkszereda – Fodor-kert (1) și planul săpăturilor (2-3)

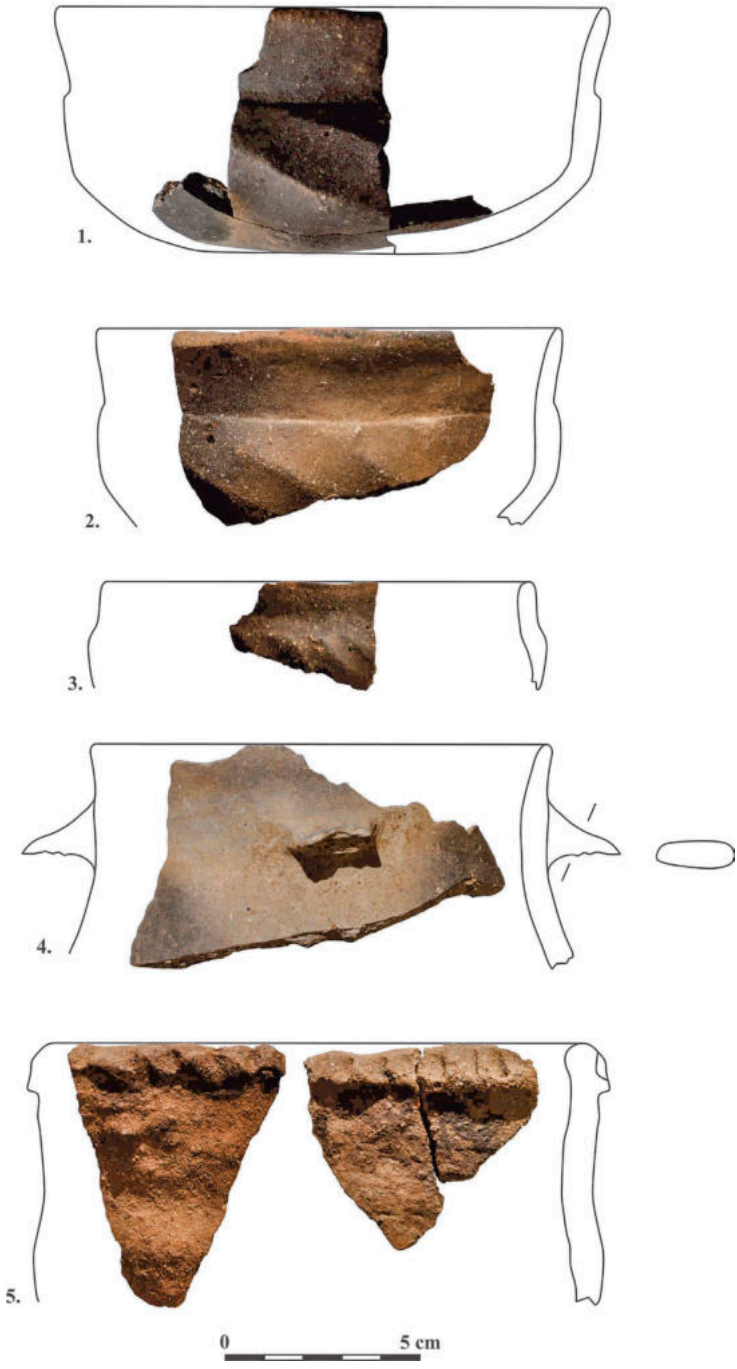


Cx 1 Cx 2 Cx 4 Cx 3

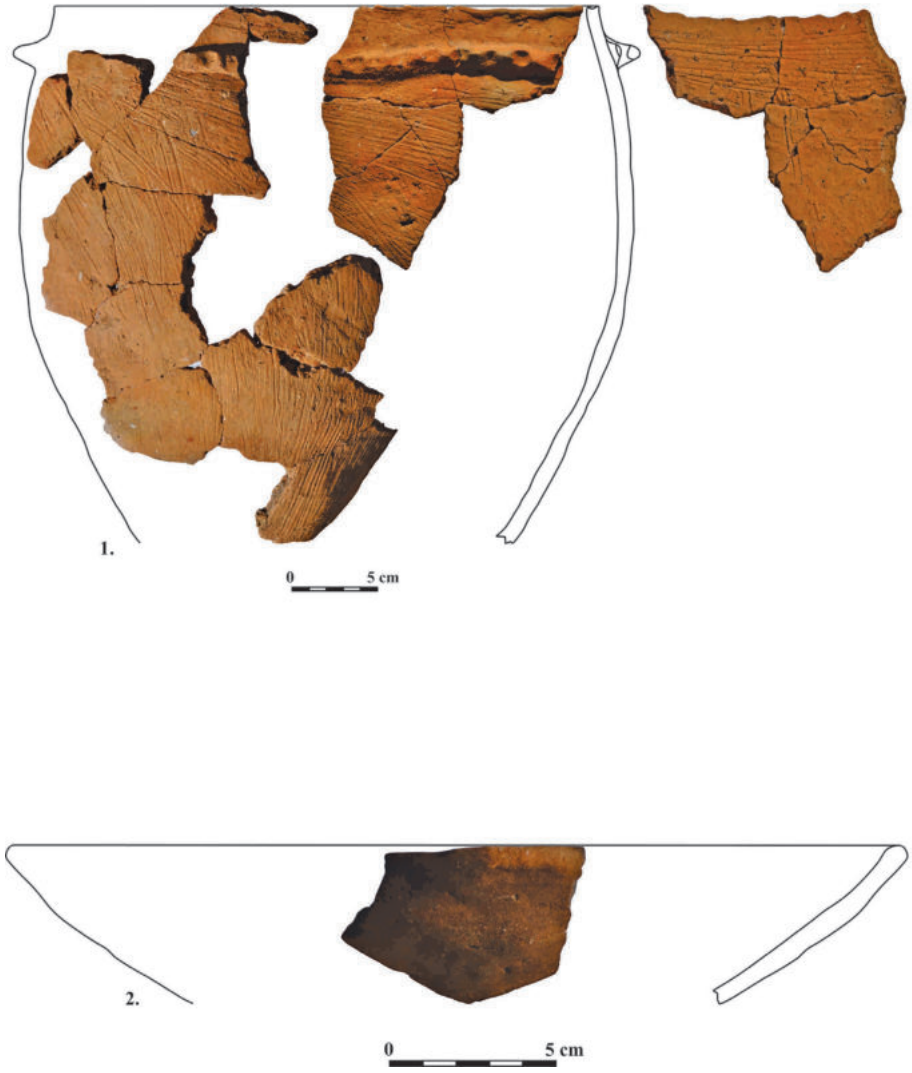
Pl. 3. The post holes (Cx 1-4) discovered during the excavations
Pl. 3. Gropile de stâlp (Cx 1-4) descoperite în timpul săpăturilor



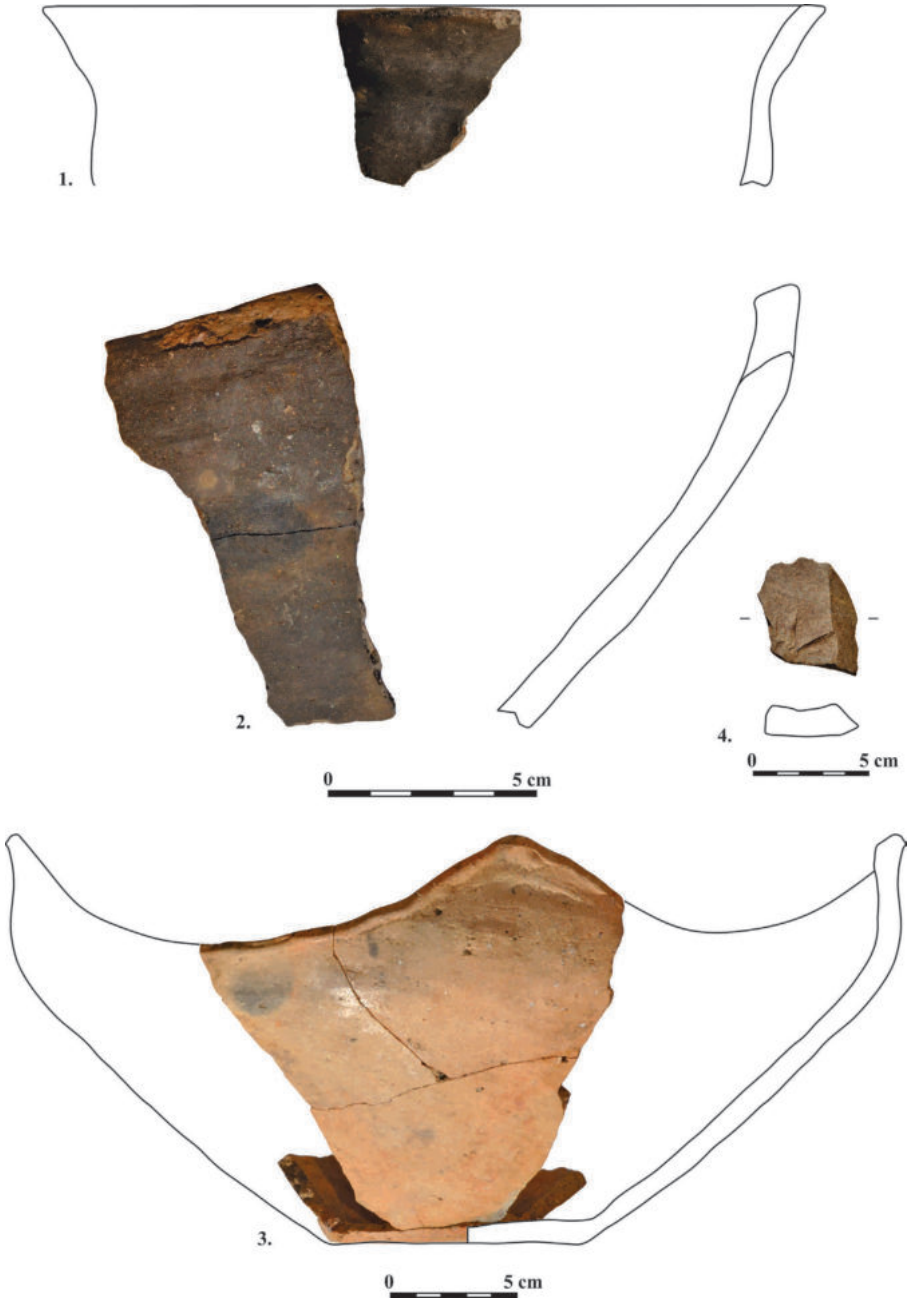
Pl. 4. The pits (Cx 5-7) discovered during the excavations
Pl. 4. Gropile (Cx 5-7) descoperite în timpul săpăturilor



Pl. 5. Middle Bronze Age pottery fragments from pit Cx 5 (1-5)
Pl. 5. Fragmente de ceramică din perioada mijlocie a epocii bronzului din groapa Cx 5 (1-5)



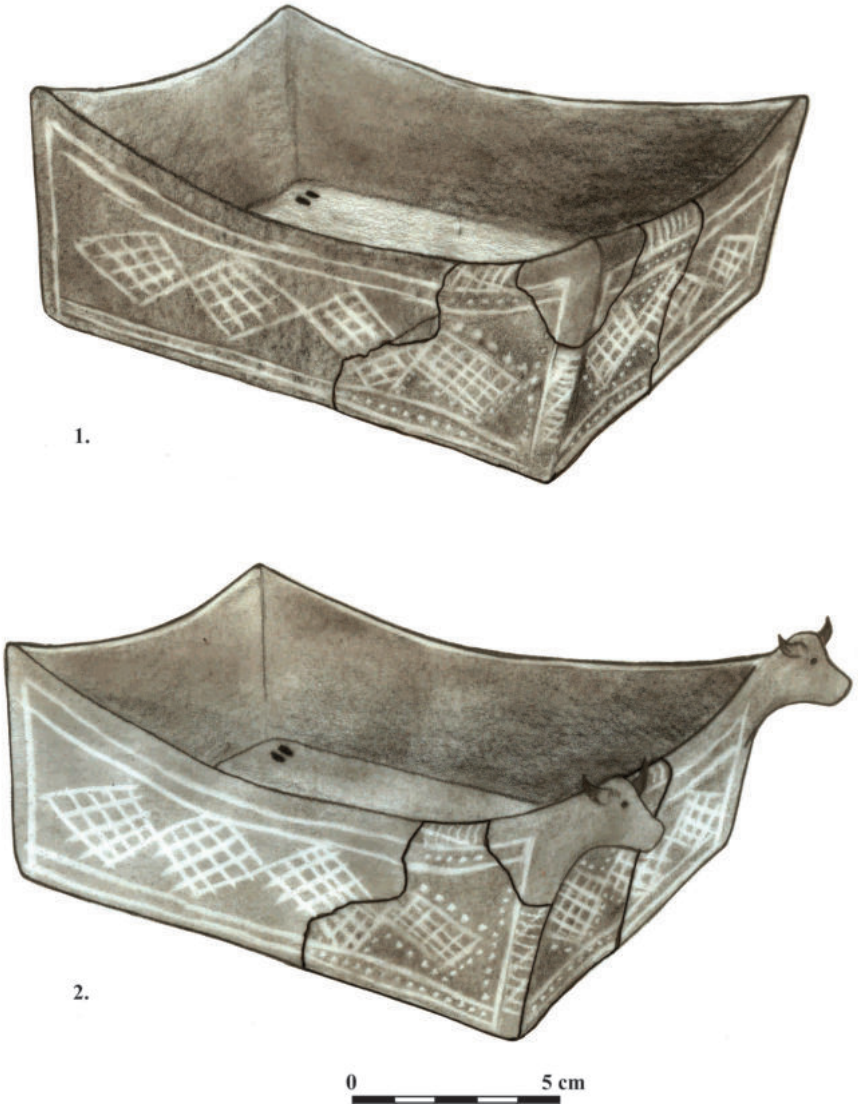
Pl. 6. Middle Bronze Age pottery fragments from pit Cx 5 (1-2)
Pl. 6. Fragmente de ceramică din perioada mijlocie a epocii bronzului din groapa Cx 5 (1-2)



Pl. 7. Middle Bronze Age pottery fragments (1-3) and stone object (4) from pit Cx 5
Pl. 7. Fragmente de ceramică din perioada mijlocie a epocii bronzului (1-3) și un obiect de piatră (4) din groapa Cx 5



Pl. 8. Fragment of the clay wagon from pit Cx 5 (1a-d)
Pl. 8. Fragment de cărucior de lut din groapa Cx 5 (1a-d)



Pl. 9. Two possible graphical reconstructions of the clay wagon model (drawings made by J. Puskás)
Pl. 9. Două posibile reconstituiri grafice ale modelului de cărucior de lut (desene realizate de J. Puskás)