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TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT

The Cucuteni settlement from Cucuteni – *Dâmbul Morii*

Abstarct

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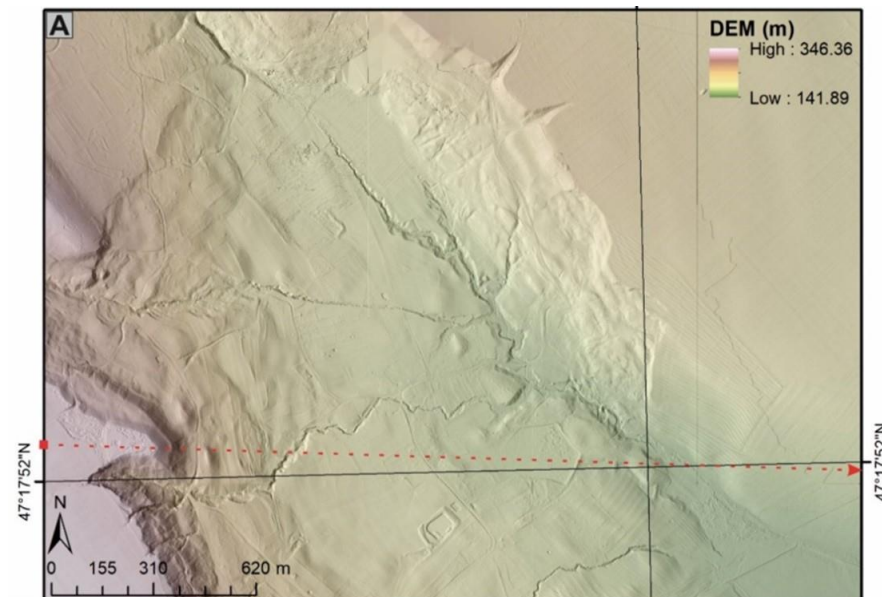
The Cucuteni settlement from Cucuteni – *Dâmbul Morii*

Abstract

Keywords: Dâmbul Morii, Cucuteni A-B, settlement, lithic tools, bone tools, ceramics.

During the study of the Cucuteni culture, a high interest was also shown in defining the characteristics of the Cucuteni A-B phase. Although there are already a number of settlements from this phase researched, little information has been published. Recently, there have been a series of steps aimed at completing the known information regarding the A-B phase.

The present approach wants to bring back to attention and complete the information known until now about the A-B phase settlement at *Dâmbul Morii*. In the first chapter, entitled **Geographical location and characteristics of the area**, we followed the geomorphological and climatic specifics of the area, the location of the site and the relations with the eponymous site on Cetățuia. Administratively, the settlement is located on the territory of the Cucuteni commune, Iași county, in the southeastern edge of the village of Băiceni, between the streams Morii to the west and Recea to the east (Fig. 1D). From the point of view of the physical-geographical units, the Cucuteni-Băiceni microzone is located on the border between the Moldavian Plain and the Suceava Plateau. From a hydrographic point of view, it belongs to the Văii Oii Basin, a tributary of the Bahluiet, located in the central western part of the Bahlui hydrographic basin.



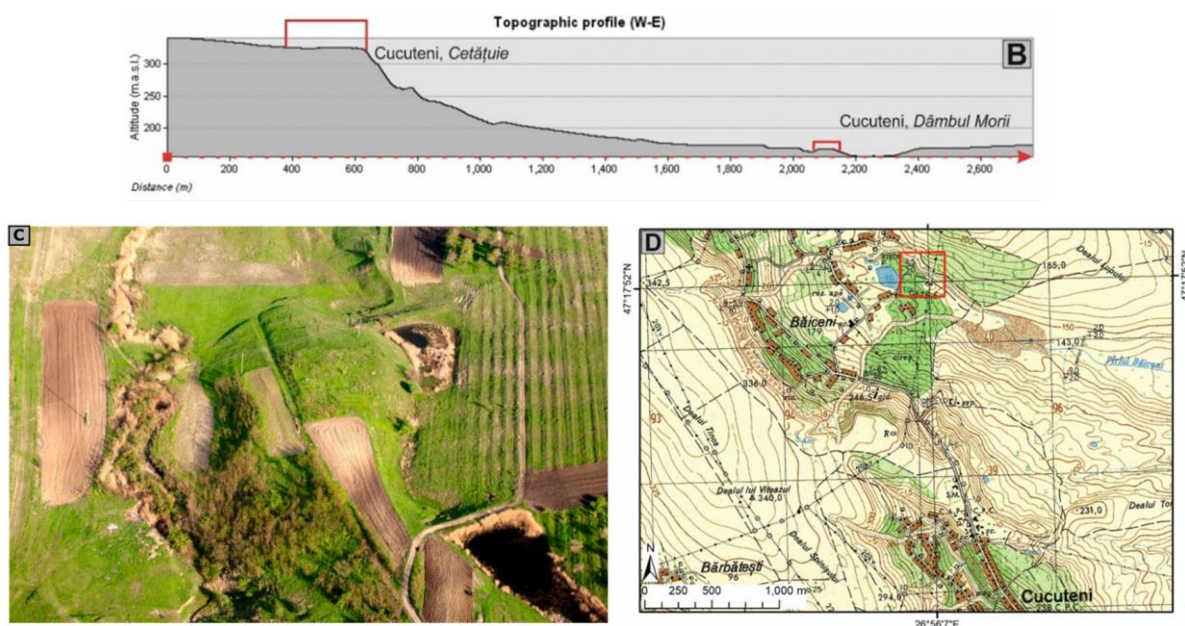


Fig. 1. Location of the settlement within the Cucuteni-Băiceni microzone (A), W-E topographical profile (B) (LiDAR DEM 0.5x0.5 m/pixel) and oblique aerial photograph from the NW (C), (after Asăndulesei, A., et alii, 2020 , fig. 3, 7); (D) topographic map (scale 1:25000).

Chapter II deals with the **History of research**. We started from the documentary base at our disposal, in the present case three excavation notebooks belonging to Professor Marin Dinu and numerous site plans. The three excavation notebooks documented eight research campaigns carried out at *Dâmbul Morii*. In addition to these, we also had at our disposal a series of site notebooks prepared by the practicing students of the Faculty of History, at that time the site was used for specialized practice. The archaeological material discovered at *Dâmbul Morii* is mostly in the archaeological collection of the Archeology Seminar of the Faculty of History in Iasi. Some pieces are exhibited at the Cucuteni Civilization Museum of the „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, as well as in the collections of the Museum of History of Modova within the Moldova National Museum Complex at the Palace of Culture in Iasi and the "Vasile Pârvan" Museum in Bârlad.

The next step concerned the identification of the site at *Dâmbul Morii*, starting from the information in the specialized literature. The first mention of the settlement was made by H. Schmidt in the monograph dedicated to the settlement on Cetățuia, where he mentions the sections made in the "Settlement in the valley - Talsiedlung.". Later, by resuming excavations in the resort on Cetățuia, starting in 1961, attention was also paid to the settlement at *Dâmbul Morii*, with the preliminary results being published in a small

monograph in 1966. The resort is later mentioned in a series of archaeological repertoires, more complete information being later given in a study carried out by Prof. D. Boghian, which targeted the settlements of the Cucuteni culture in the Bahlui basin. Some more extensive information regarding the excavations at *Dâmbul Morii* were presented in a study carried out by M. Dinu, in the volume of the *Simpozionului național Cucuteni – 120. Valori universale*.

The last stage in this chapter considered the presentation of the excavation campaigns at *Dâmbul Morii*. As I mentioned, the first excavations were carried out by the German scientist H. Schmidt, through a survey of about 31 x 2 m, in the western part of the settlement, but unfortunately, we do not have a plan of those excavations.

The excavations were resumed, and carried out during eight campaigns, starting in 1961, under the leadership of Professor Mircea Petrescu-Dîmbovița, assisted by Professor Marin Dinu, who, in the end, will coordinate the excavations at *Dâmbul Morii*. In the first phase, it is mentioned that they took place in three different sectors: sector A, the entire plateau, up to the alveolar from the north, 50 m behind the house of Gh. Burduhosu; sector B, the previously mentioned alveolar; and sector C, beyond the defense ditch, in the northern area of the promontory; but in the end sector B was abandoned and a new variant was introduced, in two sectors, Sector A, to the south-southeast and sector B to the north-northwest, separated by the alveolar of the promontory where the defense trench was identified.

In the eight excavation campaigns carried out at *Dâmbul Morii*, with some interruptions, between the years 1961-1964, 1966, 1977-1978, and 1989, a number of approximately 17 dwellings were identified and partially or fully investigated (Fig. 2), as well as a small number of pits and the defensive system of the settlement. Research began in 1961 by drawing a longitudinal trench of about 80 x 2 m, which would lead to the identification and research of dwelling no. 1, and partly dwelling no. 2, which would be investigated in the 1962 and 1963 campaigns. The 1962 campaign, in addition to the research of the dwelling no. 2 also followed the research of the defense system, which was later resumed in the 1964 campaign. The research in 1964, in addition to the defensive system, aimed both discussed sectors, being researched in sector A dwelling no. 5, and in sector B dwellings no. 7-9, and in the following year's campaign dwelling no. 6. After an interruption of 11 years, in 1977 and in 1978, the research in sector A was resumed, dwellings no. 10-16 being investigated. After another interruption of 11 years, in 1989 a

series of surveys were carried out, in the space between the two investigated areas in sector A, partially identifying the remains of dwelling no. 17. Recently, the collective of the Arheoinvest Center from the University "Al. I. Cuza" of Iași carried out a series of geophysical investigations that identified in the south-eastern sector a cluster of archaeological structures, the defensive trench, as well as two other trenches located at distances of 12 and 27 m, respectively, from the first trench.

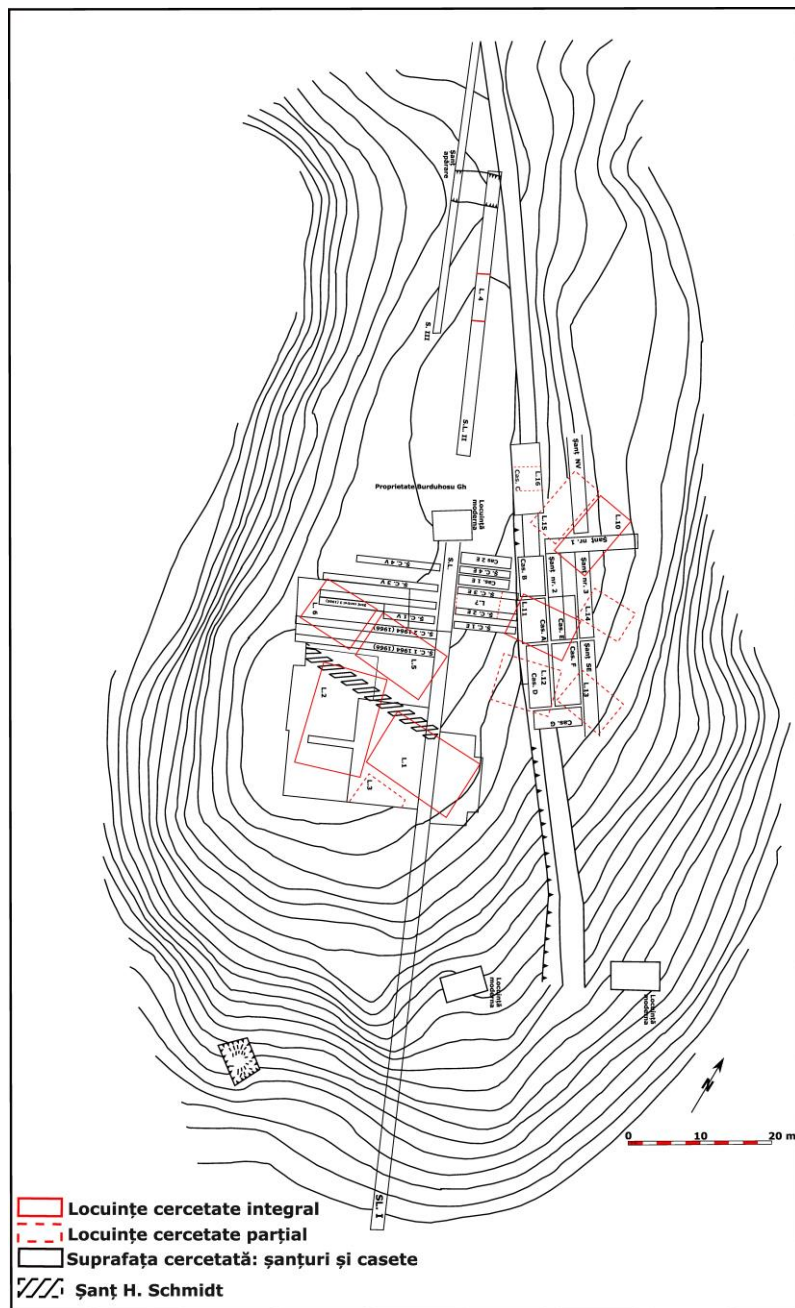


Fig. 2. Cucuteni – Dâmbul Morii. Excavation situation plan from sector A (after Dinu, M., 2006, p. 43. Completion according to the excavation plans).

Regarding the stratigraphy of the settlement, according to the information obtained from the site records, the materials appear from a depth of about 0.10/0.20 m up to 0.40/0.60 m, in the humus layer. Unfortunately, the stratigraphy has been documented in few cases, but even where we have, these plans have been made up to the culture level. Also, the discoveries of 1962 and 1963 and 1965 raise the issue of the existence at *Dâmbul Morii* of a Cucuteni A level, attested also on the basis of some ceramic materials, coming especially from the pits. We also mention the identification and research of a medieval dwelling, caught in the direction of the SLII ditch.

In Chapter III, entitled **Archaeological Complexes**, I described in detail the complexes identified at *Dâmbul Morii*. The research was methodical, most of the discovered complexes being documented by detailed excavation plans and in some cases, profile drawings especially in the area of the defense ditch, and described in three excavation notebooks. Unfortunately, the entire set of complexes (dwellings, annexes, pits, etc.) was not documented in a general plan. Their presentation, for reasons unknown to us, was carried out on excavation sectors. The result of the research was the identification of a few constructions, at least 17, and a very low number of pits. Dwelling structures were identified in two sectors, associated with two different phases of habitation, separated by the defensive system of the settlement. Most of the surveyed dwellings were in the area inside the defensive ditch, eventually named sector A, 13-14 in number, attributed to A-B₁ phase. Three other dwellings were investigated outside the same defensive ditch, the respective level being associated with the A-B₂ habitation phase. Regarding the work methodology, for each dwelling complex we created a sheet, in which we included a series of criteria such as size, orientation, state of conservation, the particularities of the walls and platforms, the number of rooms, the presence of interior constructions, as well as the inventory discovered both inside the houses and under their platforms. To complete the information obtained with the help of these sheets, I also presented the excavation plans, as far as I had them available. Starting from what was discussed above, we proposed to make a general plan of the settlement at *Dâmbul Morii*, because until now we only have a partial publication.

Among the researched dwellings complexes, dwelling no. 1 (Fig. 3) stands out, with an area of over 100 m² and at least seven to eight burning installations, which made the author of the excavations state that it would have several rooms. Unfortunately, the

information regarding the size of the dwellings is uncertain, as they were affected by agricultural works or even disturbances from the Second World War. From what we observed, all the researched dwellings seem to have combustion facilities, either hearths or ovens, some with a small hedge. The respective hearths were built on a bed of stones or ceramic fragments, some of them with clear traces of renovations, in some situations ritual deposits were also found.

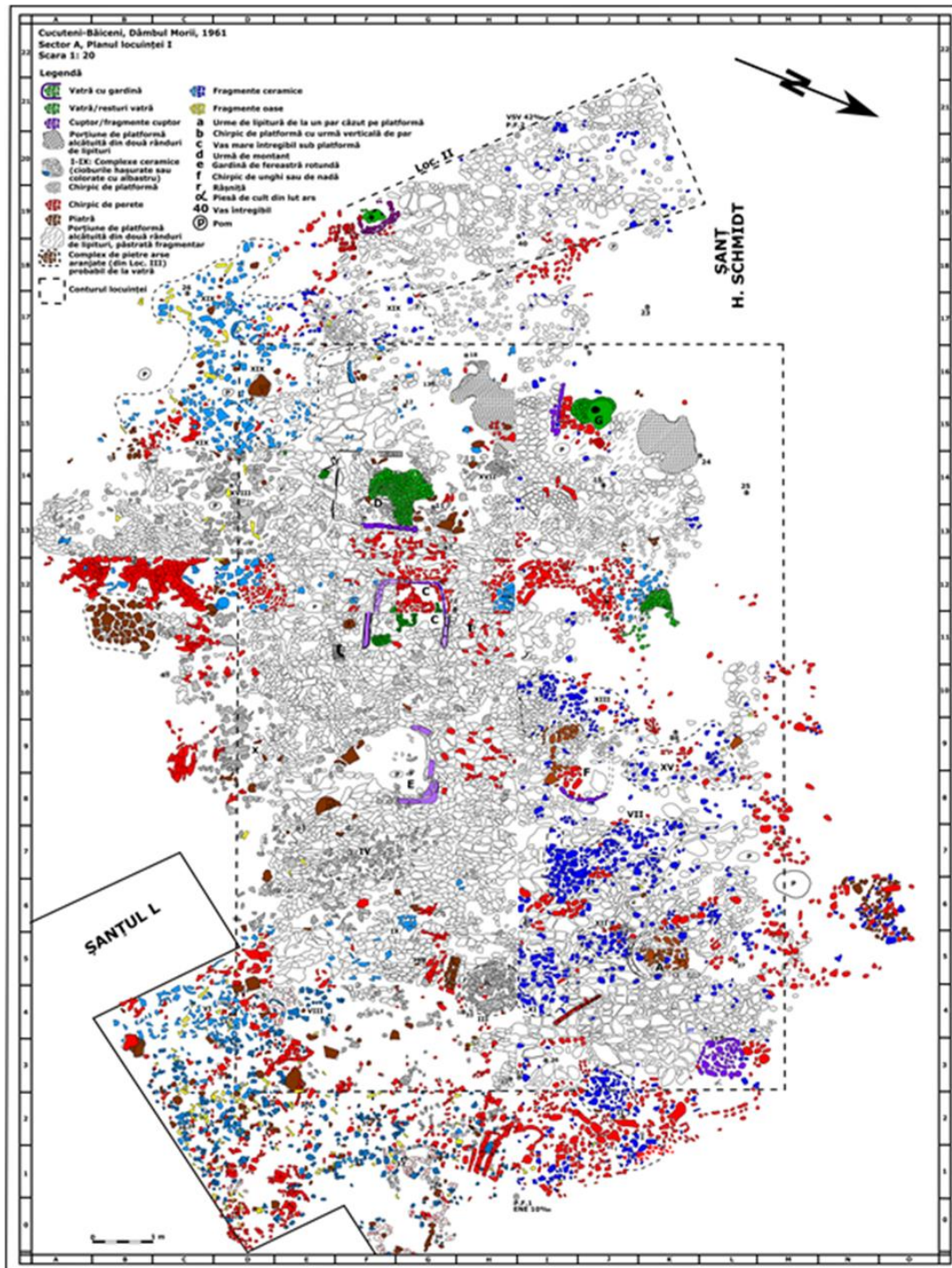


Fig. 3. Cucuteni – Dâmbul Morii. Dwelling no. 1 excavation plan.

Regarding the external household complexes, we can talk about the existence of an annex associated with dwellings no. 10 and 11, which also included an evolved hearth, attested by the large number of archaeological materials discovered near it and the lack of compact areas of solder between the two dwellings.

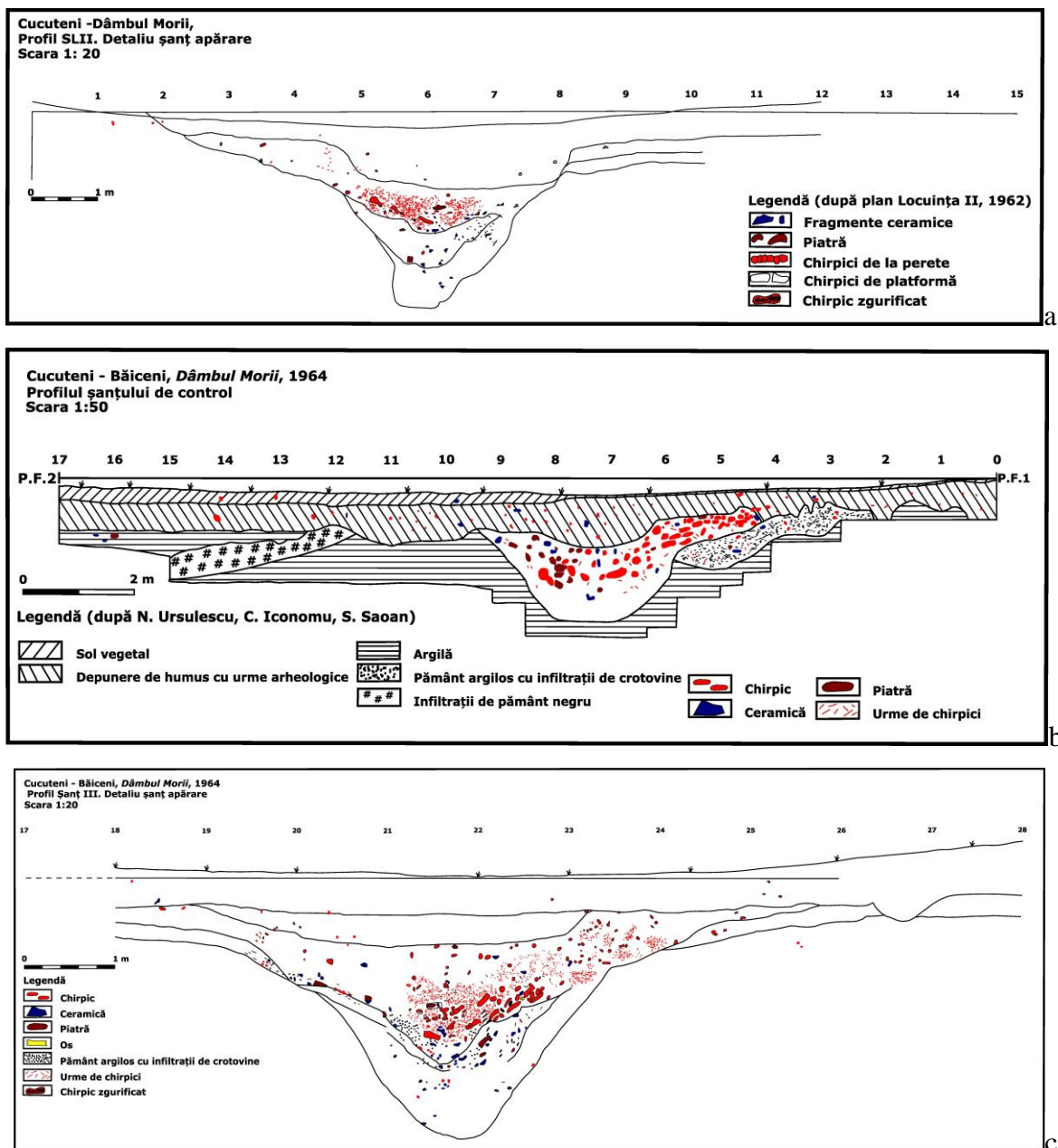


Fig. 4 Cucuteni – Dâmbul Morii. Defense trench profile. a) identified on SL II control trench; b) on the second control trench; c) identified on the control trench SIII (after Dinu, M., 2006, fig. 5).

The defensive system identified at *Dâmbul Morii* was a classic one, the settlement being naturally defended on the ENE and WSW sides. The defensive ditch was identified approximately 150 m NW of the edge of the promontory (Fig. 4). For the research of this defensive system, three control trenches were made in the campaigns of 1962 and 1964. Based on the information gathered, it seems that the defense trench, with a V-shaped profile, was 2.5-2.6 m deep, with an opening of 3.5-4 m. The materials discovered in the filling clearly suggest that it belonged to the residence Cucuteni A-B₁. The area protected by this ditch was about 2 ha. Recently undertaken geophysical surveys have revealed two other trenches at distances of 12 and 27 m respectively from the first trench, but unfortunately, we have no further information as due to lack of funds we have not been able to verify this new data.

Chapter IV, entitled **Analysis of the archaeological inventory**, includes information on the different categories of objects identified at *Dâmbul Morii*. The archaeological inventory collected in the eight excavation campaigns was extremely rich, but unfortunately the information was poorly published. Therefore, we tried to come up with additions regarding the different categories of tools discovered in this phase. The analysis of the different categories of tools discovered took into account the different raw materials used, from the method of procurement, manufacturing techniques and the finished product. The analyzed materials are in the heritage of the Interdisciplinary Center for Archaeological Studies belonging to the Faculty of History of the University "Al. I. Cuza" in Iași as well as in the Cucuteni Civilization Museum, part of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University Museum, or the "Vasile Pârvan" Museum in Bârlad.

The first category of tools discussed refers to **Artifacts made of carved stone and polished stone**. At the moment we have identified a number of about 393 pieces belonging to the carved stone industry, and 67 pieces made from different polished rocks. Before discussing each category of tools, we discussed the main raw materials and their sources of provenance. For the carved stone tools (Fig. 5), the main raw materials were the Prut flint, from the Prut Valley, to the east, or the Siret alluvium, or the Dniester flint, from the Middle and Upper Dniester areas. Less used was the Volhyno-Podolian flint from the lower reaches of the Bug, and at Zhitomir and Korobčîn. Obsidian was obtained through trading. The technological process was based on direct or indirect carving, with the help of different tools, and the products obtained were then retouched.

The most numerous category is given by blades and small blades, retouched or unretouched, 11 pieces, graters, 47 pieces, 27 arrow heads, 13 piercers, to which are added 33 strikers. Following are a series of artefacts that can be considered chips or waste resulting from processing or from exhaustion from use. Among these pieces we mentioned a large blade and a denticulated blade. As a first conclusion we note that 142 pieces were discovered inside the dwellings and 19 near them. Unfortunately, a large number of pieces, 120, come from unspecified contexts, therefore we have an incomplete picture of the distribution of tool types per dwelling. In the same situation are the pieces discovered in the 1989 campaign (107 pieces).



Fig. 5. Chipped stone tools from Dâmbul Morii.

The number of the polished lithic tools is much smaller, with around 67 pieces being discovered (Fig. 6). The artefacts in this category were divided into two: artefacts with an edge (axes, chisels, chisels) and auxiliary tools, used in various activities that involve the exploitation of the hardness/hitting capacity or the abrasive properties of the raw material (hammers, grinders, grinders, etc.). Therefore, a number of 32 objects (48%) are included in the category of pieces with an edge, 15 objects (22%), in the category of auxiliary objects, and 20 objects (30%) in the category of raw materials or waste. Regarding the degree of preservation, 41 pieces were whole, 23 pieces were in various stages of fragmentation and three pieces represented raw materials (pieces with a predefined shape).

And the context of the discovery of polished stone artifacts is diverse. A total of 41 pieces were discovered inside the dwellings, three outside dwelling no 12 and 13, three in the area considered to be the annex of dwelling 10 and 11, six pieces discovered in the campaigns of 1977 and 1978, without specifying the precise context, and 12 in the campaign of 1989. The raw material used was fine hard and marly sandstones, used especially in the manufacture of axes, adzes and chisels.

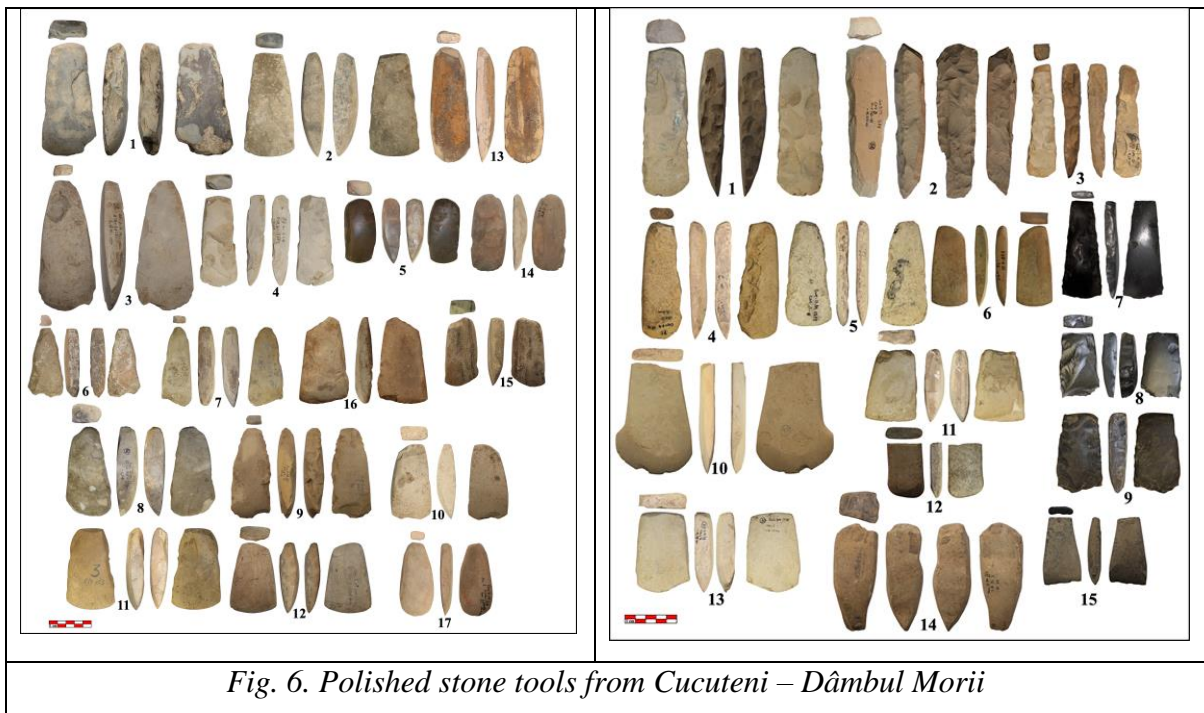


Fig. 6. Polished stone tools from Cucuteni – Dâmbul Morii

Most of the pieces from *Dâmbul Morii* fell into the category of non-perforated tools, only in one case, on a single piece, poorly preserved, the beginning of perforation can be seen. The most common pieces are the axes, with flat surfaces, edge arranged

parallel to the longitudinal axis of the tail and a symmetry or quasi-symmetry of the longitudinal section, by bifacial sharpening thus obtaining a "V"-shaped edge in various shapes, rectangular, triangular or trapezoidal.

22 axes were recovered, of which 12 are whole, eight in a fragmentary state, and two parts representing semi-finished products. We also have a number of eight fragmentary pieces, of which either the upper or the lower part has been preserved.

The second category of non-perforated pieces identified at *Dâmbul Morii* refers to tesla, five pieces, with trapezoidal or rectangular shapes. The last category of pieces with an edge is offered by chisels and chisels, in rectangular or trapezoidal form, of which a shoulder of 15 pieces reached us. From the category of auxiliary tools from *Dâmbul Morii* we identified 15 specimens, whole or fragmented, considered strikers.

As a conclusion, we find at *Dâmbul Morii* that most of the polished stone artefacts were edged pieces (axes, chisels), proof of the intensive exploitation of wood, but at the same time also tesla, used in agricultural activities. From the category of auxiliary pieces, the presence of a large number of strikers also supports the idea that the processing of polished stones was carried out at the level of the settlement. We mention the fact that these pieces were discovered especially inside the houses, therefore we cannot exclude the possibility of the existence of some workshops.

The next category of tools discussed is that of artifacts made of hard organic materials (bone and horn) (Fig. 7). A total of 71 pieces made of hard animal materials (bone or horn) were discovered. From the category of bone pieces, the most common is given by elongated pieces, used to make holes, the pieces generically pointed tools. Seven such pieces have been identified, made either on thin bones or on larger bones. The category of pieces made of bone also includes chisels, made either on whole bones or on bone fragments. Only three artefacts can be included in this category.

The repertoire of bone artefacts is completed by adornments objects. Two objects made most probably of ribs or bone fragments of large animals, probably necklaces, as well as two pieces made of deer canines.

As for the horn artefacts, about 47 pieces made of horn were discovered, most of them are considered tools used in various activities, either domestic (pointed tools, polishers, hammers, etc.), or agricultural (coulters, harrowing, hoeing, etc., etc.). A number of 12 horns show clear traces of processing. There are also a number of larger pieces, considered plowshares. These were made from deer horn (ploughs, plowshares), by

sectioning large pieces, approximately 30-50 cm long and 6-10 cm in diameter, as well as two hammers.

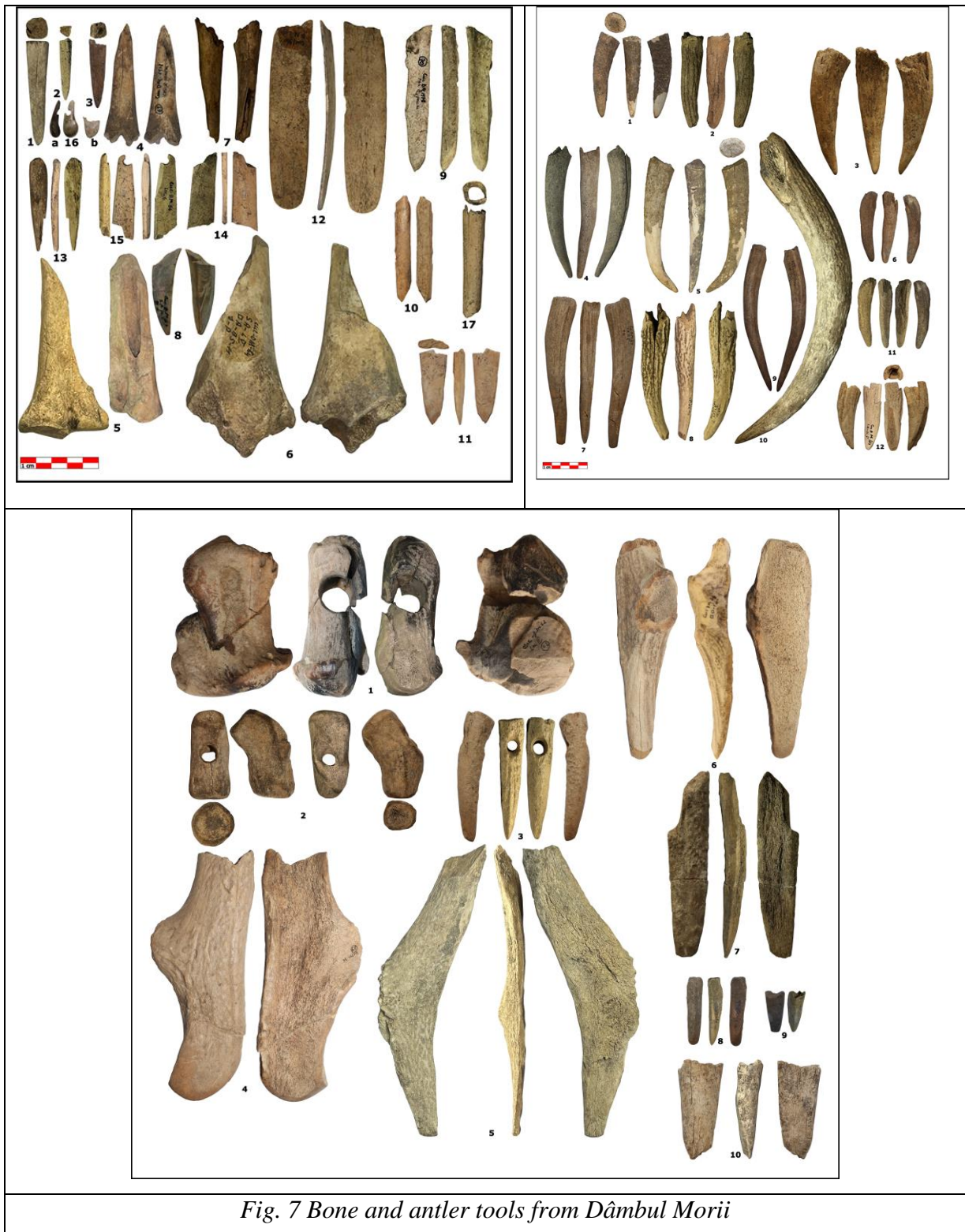
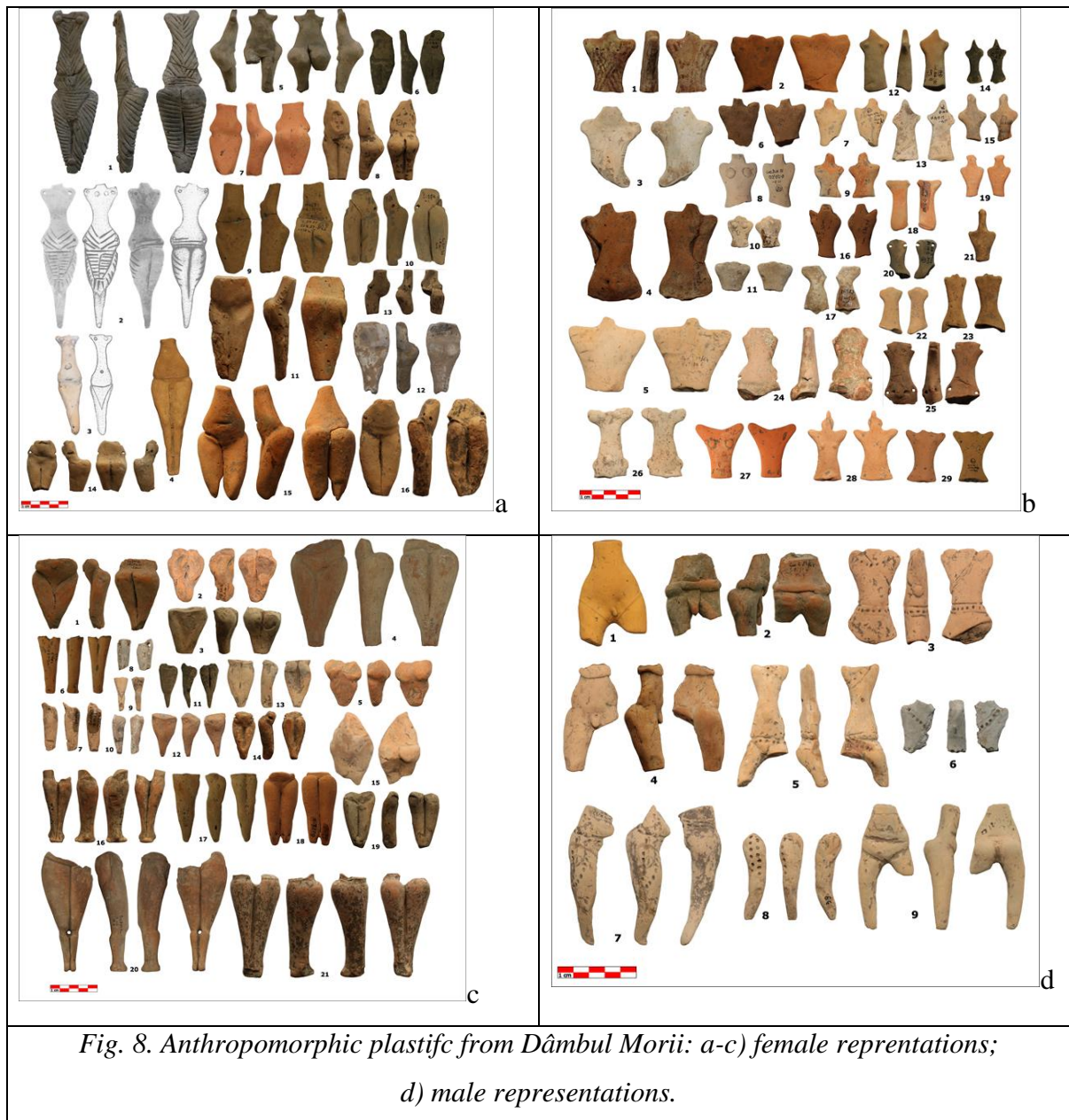


Fig. 7 Bone and antler tools from Dâmbul Morii

A significant number of pieces can be associated with **Plastic and expressions of spiritual life**. There are different anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations,

conical idols, zoomorphic vessels, fragments of altars, miniature clay models, clay discs, idols en violon. Through research at *Dâmbul Morii*, a number of 204 anthropomorphic representations were identified (Fig. 8).



Female anthropomorphic plastic (Fig. 8/1-c) gives most of the pieces identified from the *Dâmbul Morii*. Characteristic of this phase is the lengthening of the legs and body, as well as the abandonment of the archetype of the corpulent woman, specific to phase A. This transition was observed at *Dâmbul Morii*, something suggested by the parallel existence of plastic representations with features characteristic of the Cucuteni A

stage, similar to pieces discovered in Hăbășești, with a few pieces that suggest these gradual modifications.

The male anthropomorphic plastic (Fig. 8/d), lower in number compared to the female one, is characterized by split legs and by the presence of some clothing accessories such as the belt or girdle. In the plastic inventory from *Dâmbul Morii*, about 11 pieces were discovered, of which we managed to identify only nine, all in a fragmentary state. In the case of male representations, the anatomical details of sexuality are rendered realistically.

Zoomorphic plastic is represented by a low number of pieces, mostly fragmentary. About 15 pieces were discovered, only in four cases we can say that they are cattle.

In the category of cult structures identified at *Dâmbul Morii*, we discussed the hearths or altars and somewhat larger altars. Note in this case the hearths in dwelling no. 1 and dwelling no. 2. A series of pieces that can be classified as altars were also discovered in the same dwellings.

Among the cult objects discovered we discussed a number of six or seven fragments of cult tables, a conical idol and an idol en violon, a fragment of a miniature ax and an ornamental disc of clay similar to the Brad gold or copper pieces from Hăbășești and Cărbuna.

As part of the manifestations of spiritual life, we also mention the presence of rituals or ritual depositions of various objects (vessels, anthropomorphic representations, various stone or flint tools, animal bones, etc.), attested in dwellings no 1 and no 2, in pits, for the dwelling no. 6, or other dwellings (two complexes considered cult discovered on the route of trench 1 in the former cherry orchard).

In the subchapter dedicated to ceramics (Fig. 9), we discussed, based on the material studied, the types of vessels identified in the *Dâmbul Morii* settlement and the associated decoration. Before discussing this typology, we had in mind the technological process of manufacturing, from the procurement of the raw material to the final form. Among the ceramic categories identified are cups, pyriform or globular vessels, bitronconic vessels, crater vessels or wide-mouthed vessels, bowls, lids, stands or stand, footed vessels, binocular vessels and miniature vessels.

In the description of the respective vessels, we also considered the analysis of the decoration, made according to the vessel, in the registers. Unfortunately, the approach was made difficult by the fragmented state. Among the identified decorative motifs, we

mention the garland motif, the pearl motif, the spiral motif and the S-spiral motif. We also had at our disposal a batch of ceramic fragments of the Cucuteni C type. Based on these, we were able to identify the main decorative motifs and some shapes of the vessels. Unfortunately, although it is said that this pottery category can be used as a chronological criterion, we have not been able to obtain conclusive information.

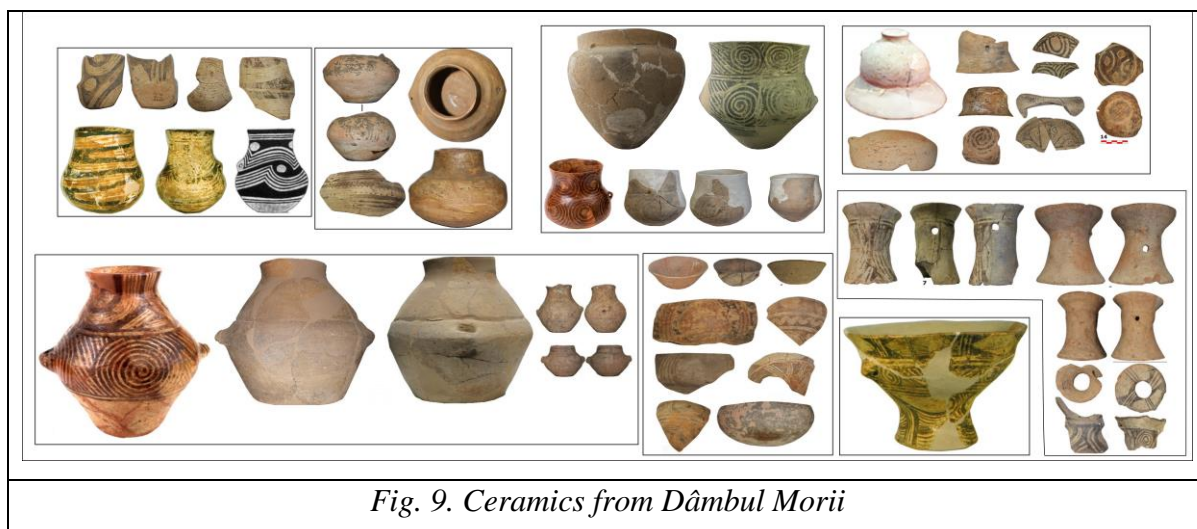


Fig. 9. Ceramics from Dâmbul Morii

In the category of various objects, we have included objects made of clay and copper. The pieces made of clay, 27 in number, can be divided into two categories: objects used in various household activities, spindles, clay weights, clay balls, etc. and ornaments. In addition to these, two specimens considered to be clay plaques were also identified, and two objects that we could not classify typologically.

In the category of copper objects, nine finds are included, mostly associated with decorative objects. Thus, two loop rings, two sets of beads glued by oxidation, or isolated, and two bracelet fragments were discovered. For some of them, we also have an elemental analysis performed on the core and on the surface, the metal and corrosion products being analyzed. The investigated objects were made of copper, no other trace elements from the used ores being identified. Regarding the analyzes carried out for the surfaces of the parts, both elements originating from corrosion products and elements originating from the soil, accumulated as a result of the depositional processes, were identified.

Chapter V, entitled **Characteristics of the settlement and comparison with other contemporary sites**, resumes the research of Cucuteni A-B phase settlements. Unfortunately, the Cucuteni A-B phase is represented by a very small number of resorts. Thus, near the *Dâmbul Morii* site, about seven settlements were identified that also had an A-B level. In terms of size, at *Dâmbul Morii* we are talking about an area of about 2 ha

inside the defense ditch and 10 ha after the extension. Regarding the number of dwellings, only in Traian - Dealul Fântâlinor it was higher, we can speak of about 17 dwellings Dâmbul Morii, 17 at Vorniceni - *Pod Ibăneasa*, or 11 at Corlăteni.

The presence of large dwellings in some settlements was associated with a more important social status, usually attributed to the leaders of the society or were considered as meeting places for the members of the respective community. This is also the case in *Dâmbul Morii* where dwelling no 1 had an area of over 100 m².

And the fortification system appears to be a classic A-B phase, with steep slopes on three sides, doubled by one or in some cases, two trenches.

Chapter VI, **The site of the Cucuteni-Dâmbul Morii settlement within the chronology of the Cucuteni A-B phase, based on the ceramic inventory and radiocarbon data. Conclusions**, question the importance of research in this settlement. The researches carried out here, in conjunction with those on Cetățuia, contributed fundamentally to the establishment of the periodization of the Cucuteni culture. The German scholar Hubert Schmidt speaks for the first time of the existence of an intermediate A-B level, based on the identified styles, but the actual Cucuteni A-B phase term is attributed to VI. Dumitrescu. Starting from the above, a series of discussions were born regarding the chronology of the A-B phase, some researchers speaking of two, three or four subphases, or even of local stylistic variants. Different from the above is the opinion of D. Boghian who supports even five or more stages of evolution.

Regarding the issue of the periodization of the Cucuteni A-B phase, based on the analysis of the ceramic material from *Dâmbul Morii*, we can make few observations. Let us not forget that all the previously presented periodization schemes were based only on selective and incomplete analysis, without connections to the complexes where the ceramic material was discovered, as published by various researchers who carried out archaeological excavations in sites of this phase.

Unfortunately, the low number of materials with clear traces of painting made our approach difficult. We can state that α_1 and β_1 styles predominate, and α_2 , β_2 , γ_1 , γ_2 are extremely rare., and researchers speak even of the lack of δ -style, assigned to level A-B₂. However, a few ceramic fragments were identified inside the defense trench with a decoration made by rows of black X's on a white background, characteristic of the γ_2 and δ_2 style. We do not know to what extent these finds attest to an overlap of phases A-B₁ and A-B₂ within the defensive ditch, but we note that these fragments were discovered inside

dwelling 2, which presumably attests to two levels of habitation. And the chronological value of the Cucuteni C type ceramics cannot be attested, in the absence of richer material, or the fragmentary state of the fragments recovered from the sector assigned to phase A-B₂.

The chronological setting of the *Dâmbul Morii* (Fig. 10) settlement was made on the basis of three older radiocarbon data, made in the Heidelberg Laboratory, on animal bones from dwelling no. 1, 4037-3978 CAL. BC, 3939-3703 CAL. BC, and from dwelling no. 2, 4221-3995 CAL. BC., supplemented by two more recent dates, carried out by the Poznan Laboratory, as a result of the AMS Radiocarbon analysis, on osteological materials from the 1977 campaign. The data obtained are consistent with those known for the Cucuteni A-B phase, indicative for this site being assigned the interval 4016 – 4007 CAL. BC.

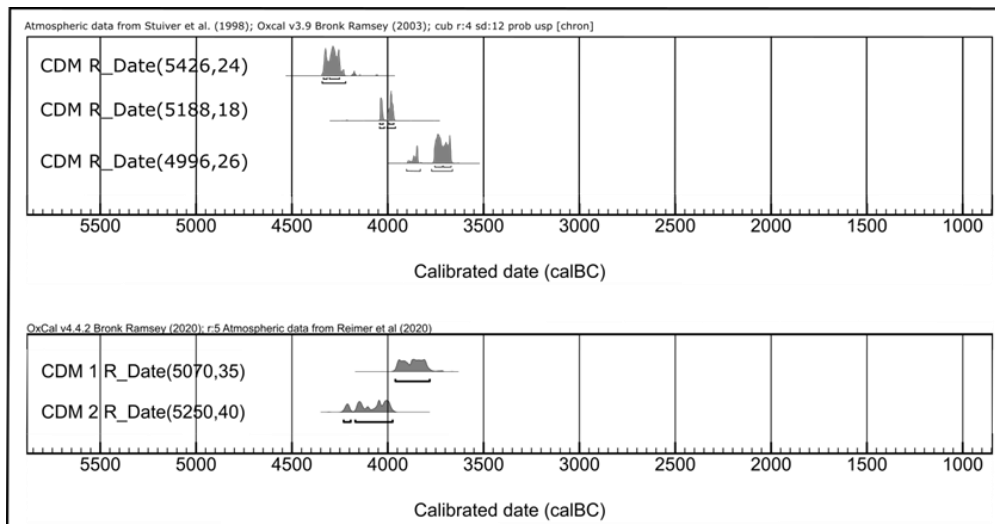


Fig. 81. Radiocarbon data obtained for the *Dâmbul Morii* settlement, calibrated with *OxCal v.3.9 (2003)* și *OxCal v.4.4.2 (2020)*.

Undoubtedly, the *Dâmbul Morii* site was as important as the eponymous settlement. The data provided following the investigation of the settlement, combined with those from other settlements outline a clear picture of the economic evolution, but also from the spiritual sphere. From the point of view of the living structures, there are houses with a platform, but there are also cases where they did not have such a structure. The presence of a large number of flint and stone impactors completes the hypothesis of the existence here of special processing workshops. Equally strong is the argument for intensive farming, as suggested by the large number of antlers, used as pickaxes or

planters, and plow implements. Also, the large number of antler tools also suggests concerns for another type of economic activities, hunting. We also do not exclude the possibility that there were certain potters and apprentices at the level of the settlement, something attested by the so-called "school vessels".

Regarding, the large number of calcined objects, as well as the presence of ceramic fragments with traces of vitrification, suggest that the settlement at the time of abandonment was subjected to a process of purification by fire, or was abandoned following an accidental fire.

We believe that the analysis of the archaeological complexes and the material resulting from the systematic excavations here represents an important contribution to the knowledge of the Cucuteni A-B phase, which complements the information obtained from other sites attributed to this phase. Added to this are the new data provided by non-invasive research, carried out by the team from Arheoinvest of which I was a part. Carrying out the present work meant a sustained effort, given that not all documentation of previous research has been preserved and we have not been able to identify all the archaeological materials sometimes mentioned in the excavation reports. I redid all the plans and tried to illustrate as many of the finds from each complex as possible, in order to create a realistic picture of the richness and importance of the *Dâmbul Morii* site. We hope that the work carried out by us represents a contribution to the knowledge of the Cucuteni A-B phase that illustrates the effort of several years of excavations, in which several generations of students were involved.

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