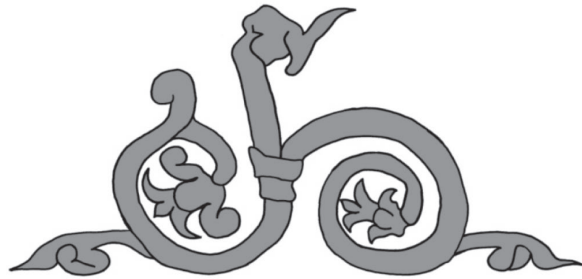


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Contents

Radu Pop, Călin Ghemiș Contributions to the Knowledge of Parietal Art in North-Western Transylvania. the Discoveries from Ileanda (Sălaj County).....	7
Florin Gogâltan, Victor Sava, Lucian Mercea Sântana “Cetatea Veche”. Metal and power.....	21
Péter Polgár Anzeichen der Metallbearbeitung bei einer Fundstelle in der Gemarkung von Sopron.....	73
Cristian Ioan Popa A Bronze-Age Hoard Discovered in Ampoița (Alba County).....	81
Victor Sava, Dan Matei Prehistoric and Second-fourth-century Discoveries on the Present-day Territory of Aradu Nou District, in the City of Arad.....	89
Cosmin Mihail Coatu, Adrian Socaci Des monnaies antiques appartenant a une collection privee.....	123
Iosif Vasile Ferencz Dacian Objects from Ardeu in the Collection of the MNIR.....	135
Cristian Constantin Roman Landmarks in the Development of Carthographic Representations of the Dacian Settlement in Ardeu (Municipality of Balșa, Hunedoara County).....	145
Alexandru Berzovan Considerations on “Troianul” in Țara Zarandului.....	161
Petru Ureche The Bow and Arrow during the Roman Era.....	183
Erwin Gáll Two 10–11 th century arrow-heads from the environs of Kotori/Cattaro – Herceg Novi/Castelnuovo. Archaeology (?) and art-dealing in the Balkans.....	197
Erwin Gáll From the fortress of Stephen I (997–1038) to the centre of ‘lord Gelou’. Dăbâca (germ.: Dobeschdorf; hung.: Doboka) in the nationalist myths in the 20th Century.	203
Luminița Andreica Implications of a tibia and fibula fracture in the secondary adaptation of the skeleton of an individual discovered in Nădlac “Lutărie” (Arad County).....	247
Florin Mărginean, George P. Hurezan, Augustin Mureșan The Medieval Church in the Village of Secaș (Arad County) and its Vestiges.....	253

Florin Ciulavu

The Monetary Reform of Vladislav II of Walachia (1447–1448; 1448–1456). Survey of research.....259

Corina Toma

A Monetary Hoard Discovered in the Settlement of Cristur (Bihor County). Aspects on the Monetary circulation of Thalers in Crişana during the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century.....279

Abbreviations.....299

Dacian Objects from Ardeu in the Collection of the MNIR¹

Iosif Vasile Ferencz

Abstract: The Dacian fortification in Ardeu is an archaeological site identified in the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, interest in the site was not constant through time. One of the most significant stages of research, performed during the twentieth century, important through both the size of the excavations and the nature of the discovered material, were the test trenches performed by Larisa Nemoianu in 1973. Unfortunately, the results of this research remained largely unpublished. The present paper aims at recovering for the academia a small part of the objects discovered on that occasion.

Keywords: fortification, Dacians, Ardeu, MNIR, south-western Transylvania.

The Dacian fortification in Ardeu (Fig. 1) is located in south-western Transylvania (Fig. 2) and was discovered in the end of the nineteenth century by Téglas Gábor. The researcher from Deva provided the first data on the site², but research continues to this day, successfully³.



Fig. 1. Cetățuie Hill. Aerial view, photo Zoltán Czajlik, May 2012

A distinct moment in the research of the Dacian fortification in Ardeu were, no doubt, the test excavations performed by Larisa Nemoianu in 1973⁴. The four trenches and four test squares⁵ did not manage to convince on the continuation of research, despite having revealed diverse and interesting materials. The few objects published together with Ioan Andrițoiu were, even then, a proof in this direction⁶, but numerous artifacts have remained, to this day, unpublished. Several years ago, through Mr. George Trohani's benevolence, I was able to research the few archaeological items discovered in Ardeu during Larisa Nemoianu's excavations. All the objects I will describe here are preserved in box

¹ MNIR – The National Museum of Romania, Bucharest. English translation: Ana M. Gruia.

² Téglas 1885, 299–307; Téglas 1888, 134–138.

³ For the state of research, see also Ferencz 2012, and for the perspectives of the investigations see Ferencz, Roman 2010.

⁴ Nemoianu, Andrițoiu 1975.

⁵ Nemoianu, Andrițoiu 1975, 181.

⁶ Nemoianu, Andrițoiu 1975.

no. 157 in the storage room of the MNIR. The most numerous artefacts in this box are specific to the Dacian civilization and are the topic of the present article.



Fig. 2. Location of the village of Ardeu, in south-western Transylvania, taken from Ferencz, Roman 2010

Item catalogue

1. Iron object with undetermined function; it is oxidized and is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, lacking an inventory number (Pl. 1/7).
2. Iron nail; through shape it might be dated to the Middle Ages. Though oxidized, it is in a good state of preservation. It is kept in the storage room of the MNIR, lacking an inventory number (Pl. 1/6).
3. Small-size iron fitting, with the decorative head in the shape of a hemispheric cap; is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, lacking an inventory number (Pl. 1/4).
4. Iron object with undetermined function (could be a support rod for the resort of a fibula), oxidized, preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, lacking an inventory number (Pl. 1/3).
5. Iron, oxidized link, preserved in the storage room of the MNIR and lacking an inventory number (Pl. 1/2).
6. Flat, convex link; due to its shape, I believe it could have been part of a scythe, but maybe also a belt buckle. The object is made of iron, has not been restored, and is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, lacking an inventory number (Pl. 1/1).
7. Strongly oxidized iron object that might be a lance heel. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, lacking an inventory number (Pl. 1/5).
8. Unfinished antler object with undetermined function. It is made from the tip of a deer antler and is trunk-shaped. Three notches can be seen on the surface. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, lacking an inventory number (Pl. 1/8)⁷.
9. Loom weight, polished on the outside, dark grey in color. The item could also be prehistoric and is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172439 (Pl. 3/2).
10. Clay loom weight made of good-quality fabric, grey in color, preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172440 (Pl. 3/1).
11. Asymmetrical small cup, grey-brown in color, made of fine fabric with inclusions of large pebbles. Preserved almost entirely, small nick on the rim. On the base one can distinguish, with difficulty, a mark in black ink. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172451 (Pl. 2/1).

⁷ Ferencz 2010, 81, no. 13, Pl. 3/1–2.

12. Clay flattening tool made by hand from a fabric with inclusions of large shards; brick-red on the outside, with calcareous depositions and traces of firing on the sole. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172441 (Pl. 3/3).
13. Pottery fragment from a wheel-thrown vessel, brick-red both inside and outside, with a black core, made of fine fabric with inclusions of sand. One can note calcareous depositions on the inside. The pot has been perforated after firing from the outside in, probably for repairs. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172245 (Pl. 2/6).
14. Large-size pot handle that could have been part of a cup or an amphora. Its characteristics are typical to Dacian pottery; it is brick-red in color and made of fine fabric, with inclusions of mica. The fragment is decorated with two stamped circles that include crosses and is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172446 (Pl. 2/7).
15. Pottery fragment decorated with a notched girdle. The pot it was once part of was made by hand from a fabric with inclusions of sand; it was coarse on both inside and outside, and was brick-red in color. Inside, one can note calcareous depositions and on the back it has the following mark, written in black ink: "ARD 76 E C1 – 0.20". It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172442 (Pl. 2/5).
16. Game piece made of a pottery fragment, brick-red in color, made of good-quality fabric with inclusions of sand. One can note calcareous depositions on the surface. Four spot-like marks were made on each side with a sharp tip. The four marks are placed around the perforation. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172447 (Pl. 3/4).
17. Pottery fragment from a pot made of fine fabric with inclusions of sand, with grey slip on both inner and outer surfaces, polished. It displays a perforation made after firing, probably for repairs, and bears the following inscription in ink: "Ardeu VI H1." It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172443 (Pl. 2/8).
18. "Fruit-bowl" rim, fragmentarily preserved, of large size, wheel-thrown from a fabric with inclusions of sand particles with large granulation, fired homogenously, covered in back slip. It has a perforation made for repairs. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172444 (Pl. 2/4).
19. Miniature pot (Dacian cup), reddish-grey in color, made by hand from a coarse fabric, with inclusions of crushed shards. Inside one can note traces of firing. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172450 (Pl. 2/3).
20. Small cup, grey in color, made by hand from a good-quality, fine fabric with inclusions of sand. It is preserved in the storage room of the MNIR, Inv. No. 172449 (Pl. 2/2).
21. Colored glass bead, prolonged in shape. Preserved entirely, kept in the storage room of the MNIR, lacking an inventory number (Fig. 3).

As one can note from the catalogue above, box no. 157 contains a great variety of objects. They are entirely or fragmentarily preserved, made of various materials such as clay, iron, glass, and deer antler. The same diversity can also be noted on the function of these items. The lot includes entire of fragmentary pots, parts of tools and utensils, building materials, or jewelry items.

The artifacts made of iron are generally oxidized, but the state of preservation of some of them is rather good. The glass bead and the antler item are very well preserved, while among the pottery objects one can find both entire and partially preserved items. The presence of calcareous depositions indicates the environment in which they were preserved, considering the fact that "Cetățuia" in Ardeu is a calcareous hill.

Conclusions

The link described in the catalogue at no. 6 (Pl. 1/1) was probably an element from a scythe type II according to the typology suggested by Ioan Glodariu and Eugen Iaroslavschi⁸. Such tools are frequent finds on Dacian sites⁹. Scythes are discoveries attested more often through such elements than through



Fig. 3. Glass bead discovered in Ardeu

⁸ Glodariu, Iaroslavschi 1979, 74.

⁹ Glodariu, Iaroslavschi 1979, 73–74.

their blades¹⁰. Circular links, such as the one described here at no. 5 (Pl. 1/2) had different uses and thus one cannot establish with certainty their function¹¹.

As for the rod described at no. 4 (Pl. 1/3), establishing its function is also difficult. It could have been a support rod for the resort of a fibula, but could have also had some other use.

The nails and fixtures are among the building materials most often encountered on Dacian fortifications and settlements¹².

The item described at no. 7 (Pl. 1/5) was probably used as a lance heel. Numerous such items are known, used during various periods¹³.

The flattening tool described in the catalogue at no. 12 (Pl. 3/3) is an object whose domestic use has only been suggested several years ago. At first, such objects were thought to have been used as pottery polishers¹⁴, but later on Mircea Babeş suggested another interpretation, according to which they were pottery stamps, employed in the modeling of pots and not in the polishing of surfaces¹⁵. Vladimir Kotigoroško issued another hypothesis to which I adhere: the objects under discussion can be included in the category of utensils, being used in the flattening of seams and of the surface of leather¹⁶.

Loom weights can be included in the category of utensils frequently found in domestic inventories from Dacian settlements¹⁷.

The function of the unfinished object made of deer antler (no. 8, Pl. 1/8) cannot be inferred, but similar items have also been found in Ardeu during more recent researches¹⁸. The extension of research during the campaigns of 2004¹⁹, 2009²⁰, 2010²¹, 2011 and 2013²² led to the identification and research of a blacksmith's workshop; the man also produced objects made of bronze and hard animal materials²³.

Glass beads are often found in Dacian fortifications and settlements²⁴, but also in funerary complexes and among object depositions²⁵. Items similar to the one illustrated here are known from Poiana²⁶.

Miniature pots are also common among the Dacians. They have been interpreted on various occasions as ritual objects, toys, or functional, practical objects²⁷. Small cups like the ones illustrated here (no. 20, Pl. 2/2, no. 19, Pl. 2/3) were also found during more recent researches in Ardeu²⁸.

The game piece or round object made of a pottery shard (no. 16, Pl. 3/4) is also of a type usually encountered among artefacts discovered in Dacian contexts. Some of them have been perforated, like the item illustrated here, but the orifice is too narrow to have rendered the object useful as a spindle weight²⁹. Items of this type, perforated or not, made of pot wall fragments but also of other materials, have been interpreted as objects used for counting, voting, or as game pieces³⁰. The four spot-like

¹⁰ Andrişoiu, Rustoiu 1997, 102.

¹¹ Glodariu, Iaroslavschi 1979, 126.

¹² Glodariu, Iaroslavschi 1979, 114–119.

¹³ Glodariu, Iaroslavschi 1979, 132–133.

¹⁴ Crişan 1967, 205.

¹⁵ Babeş 1980, 23–31.

¹⁶ Kotigoroško 1995, 91–92.

¹⁷ Rustoiu 2002, 70.

¹⁸ Ferencz 2010, 80, no. 4, (Pl. 3/3–4).

¹⁹ Ferencz *et al.* 2005.

²⁰ Ferencz *et al.* 2010.

²¹ Ferencz *et al.* 2011.

²² The results of the campaigns performed in 2011 and 2013 remain unpublished, but for the manufacture of objects from hard animal matter in Ardeu, see also Ferencz, Beldiman 2012.

²³ Ferencz 2010, 82, footnote 30; Ferencz, Beldiman 2012, 48.

²⁴ See for example the items discovered in Sighişoara-Wiettemberg: Andrişoiu, Rustoiu 1997, 114–115; the ones from Tilişca: Lupu 1989, 78–79, Poiana: Vulpe, Teodor 2003, 65–66 or Ocniţa: Berciu 1981, 30, 40, 51, Pl. 20/17–18, Pl. 120. See for example in Hunedoara-Castle Yard: Sirbu *et al.* 2007, 77.

²⁵ Vulpe, Teodor 2003, Fig. 129/26. The analogy is just for the shape, as the item in Poiana is decorated with “eyes”.

²⁷ Andrişoiu, Rustoiu 1997, 97–101. I agree with the authors who believe that according to the context of discovery, all three above mentioned hypotheses can describe their function.

²⁸ Ferencz 2011, 41.

²⁹ Andrişoiu, Rustoiu 1997, 91.

³⁰ Pop 1995–1996, 71–74; Andrişoiu, Rustoiu 1997, 91.

marks and even the perforation in the pot wall fragment might indicate a certain value assigned to the item during the game³¹.

As for the function of the pots of which the decorated fragments were once part of, one can note that they were cooking vessels (no. 15, Pl. 2/5), tableware items (no. 17, Pl. 2/8 and no. 18, Pl. 2/4), and vessels employed for serving and storing liquids (no. 14, Pl. 2/7). One of the pottery fragments (no. 13, Pl. 2/6) was part of a large vessels used in the storing of provisions.

All vessels of which the fragments here belong to have numerous analogies among Dacian vessels, therefore I shall not insist on the issue. It is interesting to note the large number of pot fragments perforated after firing. Such orifices have been interpreted as the result of attempts at repairing certain vessels accidentally broken during antiquity.

Few details are available on Larisa Nemoianu's researches in Ardeu. No ground plan has been published, not even sketchily, to indicate the location of the research units. One only knows their number. Traces of older trenches have been identified during researches performed on top of Cetățuie Hill in recent years. Some of them might have been performed by the above mentioned researcher from Bucharest during her test excavations. The marks than can still be noticed on certain items do not aid in the attempt to attribute them to one trench or another, but the fact that they are not very similar might suggest that the objects stored in box no. 157 were found in different research units and one might consider them as "special materials".

All these elements aid in the reconstruction of a general overview of Dacian settlement on top of Cetățuie Hill in Ardeu.

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³¹ Pop 1995–1996, 73.

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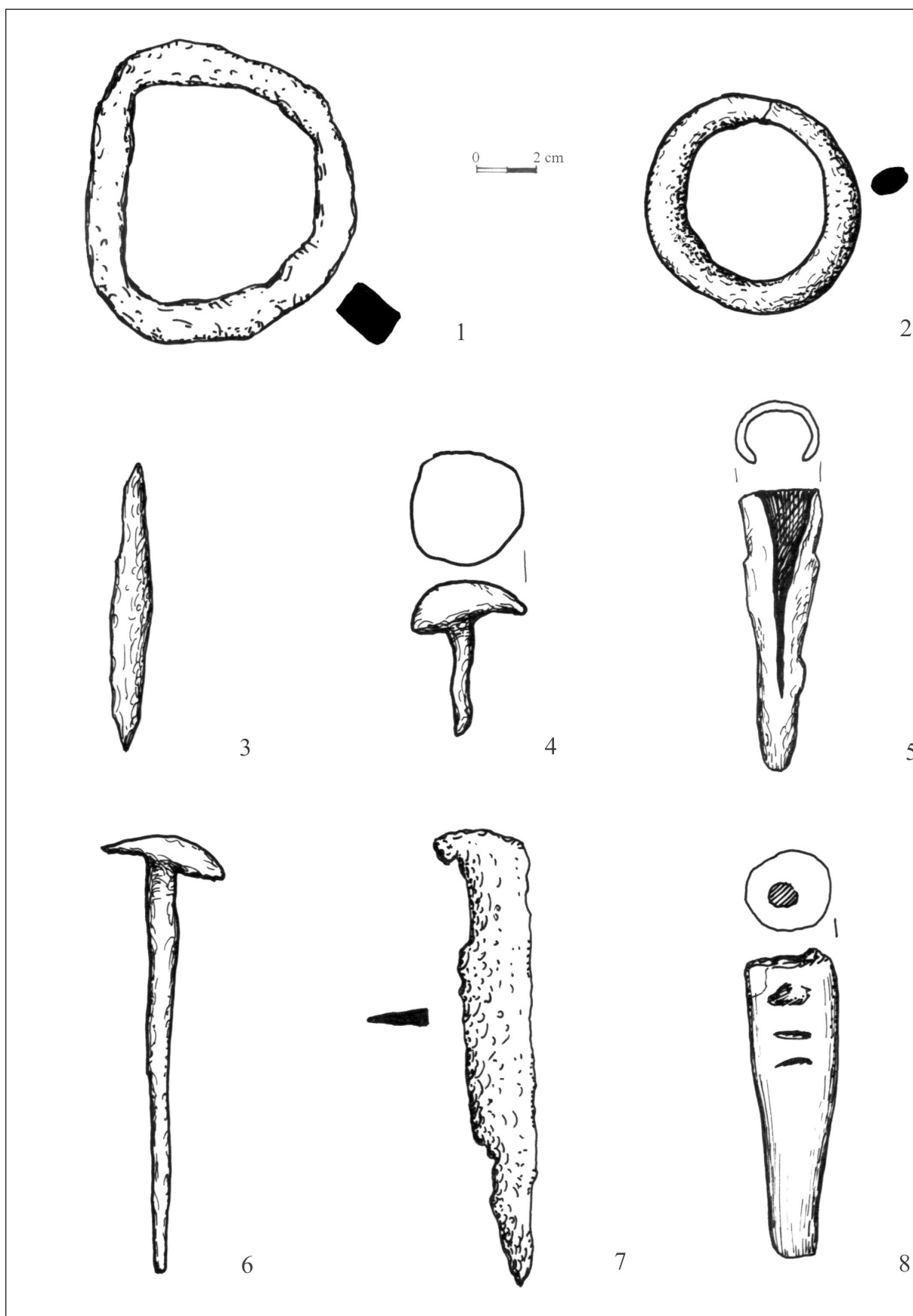


Plate I. Objects discovered in Ardeu. 1–7 made of iron; 8 deer antler.

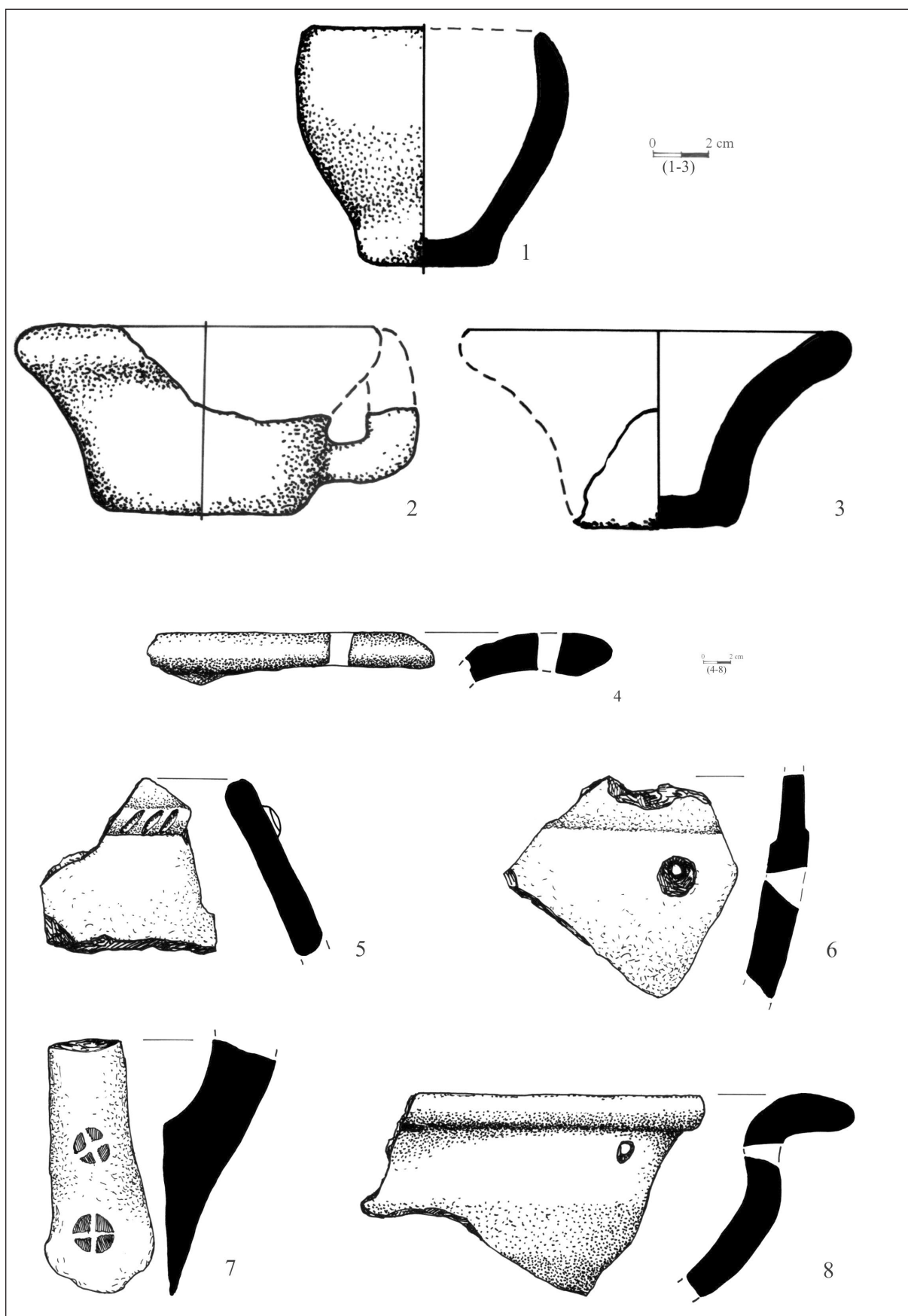


Plate II. Entire and fragmentary pots discovered in Ardeu.

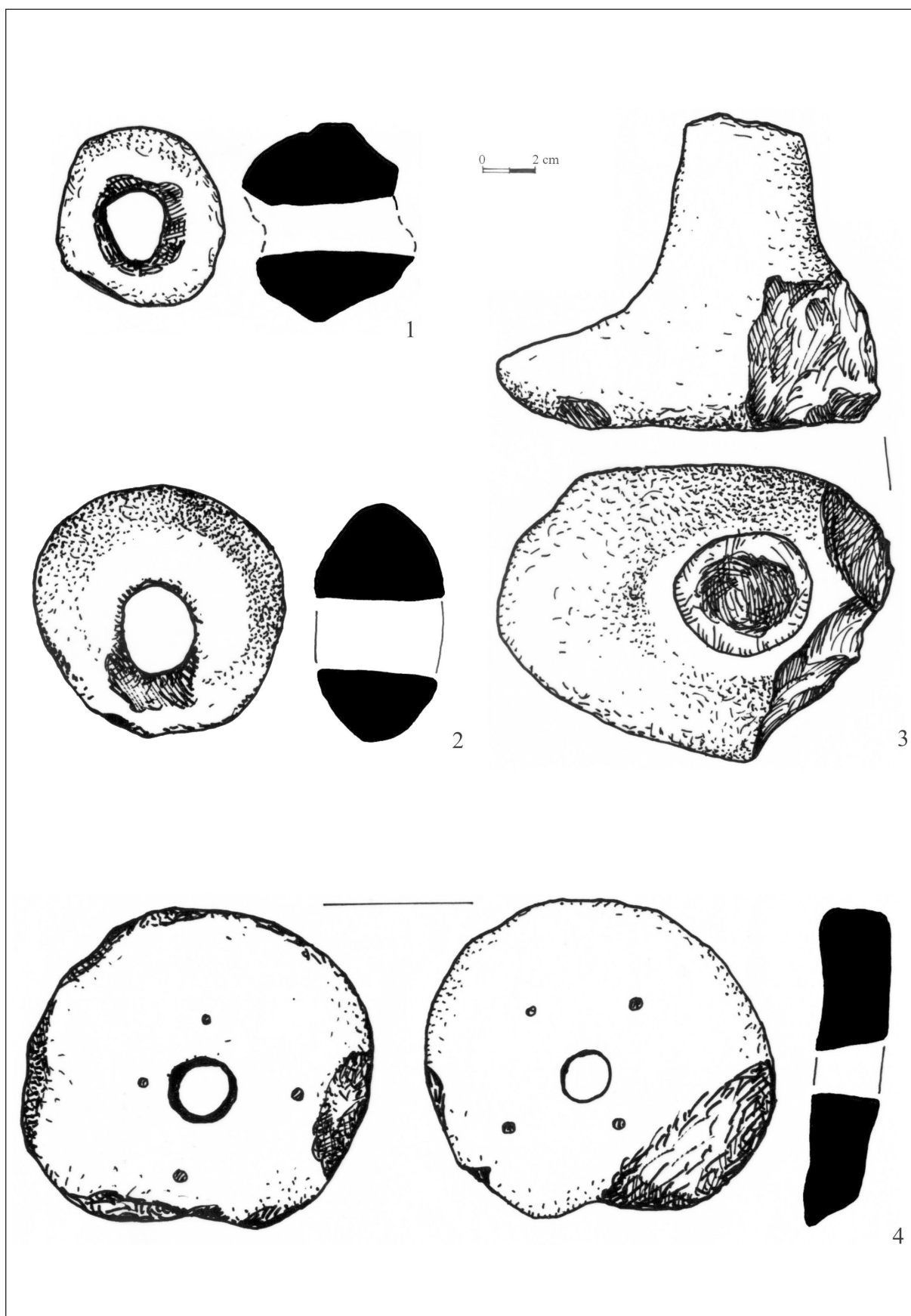


Plate III. Tools made of clay discovered in Ardeu.

Abbreviations

AAC	Acta Archaeologica Carpathica. Cracovia.
AARMSI	Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice. București.
ACSSTU	Annals. Computer Science Series Tibiscus University. Timișoara.
ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae. Budapest.
AÉ	Archaeologiai Értesítő. Budapest.
AGGH	Acta Geodaetica et Geophysica Hungarica. Budapest.
AIINC	Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională Cluj. Cluj-Napoca.
AISC	Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice. Sibiu.
AJPA	American Journal of Physical Anthropology. New York.
Alba Regia	Alba Regia. Annales Musei Stephani Regis. Az István Király Múzeum Közleményei. Székesfehérvár.
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
AMP	Acta Musei Porolissensis. Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Artă Zalău. Zalău.
AnB S.N.	Analele Banatului, Serie nouă. Timișoara.
Analele ANTIM	Analele Asociației Naționale ale Tinerilor Istorici din Moldova. Chișinău.
Apulum	Apulum. Alba-Iulia.
ArchKorrbl	Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt. Urgeschichte, Römerzeit, Frühmittelalter. Mainz.
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală. Brăila, Reșița, Cluj-Napoca.
AS	Acta Siculica. Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe.
ATS	Acta Terrae Septencastrensis. Sibiu.
AUVT	Annales d'Université Valahia Targoviste, Section d'Archéologie et d'Histoire. Târgoviște.
BAM	Brvkenthal Acta Mvsei. Sibiu.
BAR International Series	British Archaeological Reports, International Series. Oxford.
Banatica	Banatica. Muzeul Banatului Montan. Reșița.
BĂMÉ	A Béri Balogh Ádám Múzeum Évkönyve. Szekszárd.
BCȘS	Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studentești. Istorie-Arheologie-Muzeologie. Alba Iulia.
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CNA	Cronica Numismatică și Arheologică, Societatea Numismatică Română. București.
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Crisia	Crisia, Muzeul Țării Crișurilor, Oradea.
Cumania	Cumania. A Bács-Kiskun Megyei Önkormányzat Múzeumi Szervezetének Évkönyve. Kecskemét.
Dacia N.S.	Dacia. Recherches et Découvertes Archéologiques en Roumanie, București; seria nouă (N.S.): Dacia. Revue d'Archéologie et d'Histoire Ancienne. București.
DMÉ	A Debreceni Déri Múzeum Évkönyve. Debrecen.
DolgKolozsvar	Dolgozatok az Erdély Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából (Travaux de la section numismatique et archéologique du Musée National de Transylvanie). Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca.

DolgSzeged	Dolgozatok a Szegedi Tudományegyetem Régiségtudományi Intézetéből. Szeged.
Drobeta	Drobeta. Muzeul Regiunii Porților de Fier. Drobeta Turnu-Severin.
EME	Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület. Cluj-Napoca.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis. Cluj-Napoca.
ETF	Erdélyi Tudományos Füzetek – Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület. Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca.
Fdi	File de istorie, Muzeul de Istorie. Bistrița.
FolArch	Folia Archaeologica. A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Évkönyve. Annales Musei Nationalis Hungarici. Budapest.
Germania	Germania. Anzeiger der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Berlin.
História	História – történelmi folyóirat. Budapest.
HK	Hadtörténelmi Közlemények. Budapest.
HOMÉ	A Herman Ottó Múzeum Évkönyve. Miskolc.
Istros	Istros. Muzeul Brăilei. Brăila.
JAHC	Journal for the Association of History and Computing. Michigan University.
JahrbRGZM	Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums zu Mainz, Mainz.
JAMÉ	Janus Pannonius Múzeum Évkönyve. Pécs.
KL	Kartografické listy. Bratislava.
Korall	<i>Korall Társadalomtörténeti Folyóirat</i> . Budapest.
Közl	Közlemények az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiségtárából. Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca.
Lucrări	Lucrări Științifice. Istorie-Științe-Pedagogie, Institutul Pedagogic. Oradea.
GT	Geographia Technica. International Journal of Technical Geography. Cluj-Napoca.
Marisia	Marisia. Marisia. Studii și materiale. Arheologie – Istorie – Etnografie. Târgu-Mureș.
MCA	Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice. București.
MEKSB	A Miskolci Egyetem Közleménye. A sorozat, Bányászat. Miskolc.
MFMÉ StudArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. Studia Archaeologica. Szeged.
MFMÉ MonArch	A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. Monumenta Archaeologica. Szeged.
MHB	Monumenta Historica Budapestinensia. Budapest.
MIM	Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie, Muzeul de Istorie a Municipiului București. București.
MSW	Materialy Starozytne Wczesnosredniowieczne. Kraków.
MW	Materialy Wczesnośredniowieczne. Kraków-Wrocław-Warsawa.
NK	Numizmatikai Közlöny, Magyar Numizmatikai Társulat. Budapest.
NNT	Norsk Numismatisk Tidsskrift.
NZ	Numismatische Zeitschrift, herausgegeben von der numismatischen Gesellschaft in Wien. Wien.
OJA	Oxford Journal of Archaeology, Oxford.
OpHung	Opuscula Hungarica. Budapest.
PBF	Praehistorische Bronzefunde.
Potaissa	Potaissa. Studii și comunicări. Turda.
PZ	Prähistorische Zeitschrift. Berlin.
Régészeti Füzetek	Régészeti Füzetek. Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum. Budapest.
RÉSÉE	Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes. l'Institut d'Études Sud-Est Européennes de l'Académie Roumaine. București.
RI	Revista de Istorie, Institutul de Istorie „Nicolae Iorga”. București.
RM	Revista Muzeelor. Centrul pentru Formare, Educație Permanentă și Management în Domeniul Culturii. București.
RRH	Revue Roumaine d'Histoire, Academia Română. București.
Sargetia	Sargetia, Muzeul Civilizației Dacice și Romane Deva.

Savaria	Savaria – a Vas megyei múzeumok értesítője. Pars historico-naturalis. Szombathely.
SCIIVA	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie). București.
SCN	Studii și Cercetări Numismatice. Institutul de Arheologie „Vasile Pârvan”. București.
SCȘI	Studii și Cercetări Științifice. Istorie.
SIB	Studii de Istorie a Banatului. Universitatea de Vest Timișoara.
SlovArch	Slovenská Archeológia. Bratislava.
SMIM	Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie. Institutul de Istorie „Nicolae Iorga”. București.
SMK	Somogyi Múzeumok Közleményei. Kaposvár.
SSCR	<i>Social Science Computer Review. North Carolina State University.</i>
Speculum	Speculum. Cambridge Journals Online. Cambridge.
StComCaransebeș	Studii și Comunicări. Etnografie. Istorie. Caransebeș.
StComSatuMare	Studii și Comunicări. Satu Mare.
Stratum plus	Stratum plus Journal. High Anthropological School University. Cultural Anthropology & Archaeology.
Studia Caroliensia	Studia Caroliensia. A Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem szakfolyóirata. Budapest.
Studia Comitatus	Studia Comitatus. Tanulmányok Pest Megye Múzeumaiból. Szentendre.
Századok	Századok. A Magyar Történelmi Társulat Folyóirata. Budapest.
Terra Sebus	Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabasiensis. Sebeș.
Thraco-Dacia	Thraco-Dacia. București.
Transilvanian Review	Transilvanian Review/Revue de Transylvanie. Cluj-Napoca.
TS	Történelmi Szemle. A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Történettudományi Intézetének Értesítője. Budapest.
UPA	Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorische Archäologie. Bonn.
VAH	Varia Archaeologica Hungarica. Budapest.
VMMK	Veszprémi Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei. Veszprém.
World Archaeology	World Archaeology. London.
ZfA	Zeitschrift für Archäologie. Berlin.
Ziridava	Ziridava, Complexul Muzeal Arad. Arad.
ZMSW	Zeitschrift für Münz-, Siegel- und Wappenkunde. Berlin.

