

Few taxonomical and historical Considerations on the Early Bronze Age Tumular Graves in the Carpathians - Prut Area

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Although the tumular burial practice occurs in the Carpathians-Prut area both before and after the Early Bronze Age (EBA) (ca. 3100/2900 - 2100/2000 BC, cal. dates), the data about tumular graves dated to the EBA period are the most numerous.

So far, for a certainty, in Northern Moldavia the earliest tumular grave is Grave No. 1/ Corlăteni - *Dealul Stădoile* (with a skeleton in contracted position on the right) (Comșa 1982, 85-87, fig. 2), which can be referred, perhaps, to the Horodiștea II period and can be attributed to the Bursuceni type of tumular burials, recently emphasized in the Prut-Nistru area (Manzura 1993, 33; Manzura, Sava 1994, 169; Burtănescu 1996, 94-96). Also here, at Slobozia-Hănești - *La Val* (Grave No. 5/ T.I; excavations Em. and N. Zaharia, F. Aprotosoiaie in 1972) was discovered a primary tumular grave, unfortunately disturbed, which, judging from the proportions of the pit-grave, had initially an adult in extended position, but we know only that this burial is subsequent to the Cucuteni B2 phase and previous to the late Pit-Grave period, while the dating of the Grave No. 4/ Manoleasa - *Movila Hrișteni* (excavations Em. and N. Zaharia, F. Aprotosoiaie in 1973), with skeleton in contracted position on the left side, surrounded by a stone circle (cromlech), is uncertain.

As yet, in Southern Moldavia, the earliest tumular burials belong to the Foltești II-Roman - Cernavodă II cultural horizon (Grave No. 11/ Vânători: Brudiu 1985, 237, fig. 2/3, 3/3, which represent the first stage of the Vânători-Bolotești group; Grave No. 22/ Grivița - *Movila Arbănașu*: idem 1996).

To the west of the Prut river there are two points with funeral complexes which can be attributed to the cultural horizon (group) Giurgiu-lești-Suvorovo-Casimcea-Kjulevča (represented by flat graves or graves digging into natural mounds) dated to the Cucuteni A - Tripolie B 1 period, both situated in Southeastern Moldavia: Fundeni-Lungoci (one grave: Dragomir 1976, 53-55, fig. 1, 2; for its accurately chronological integration, see D. Leahu 1992, 116; Petrenko 1993, 16-18) and Fălciu (three graves: Popușoi 1994). However, the discovery conditions make it impossible to determine the character of the graves, i.e. flat or tumular burials. In addition, there have been discovered in this region, realistic zoomorphic (two pieces) and schematic (five pieces) sceptres (Dodd-Oprișescu, Mitrea 1983; one of the schematic sceptres was recently emphasized at Ruginoasa, Iași county, and it probably come from the well-known Cucuteni A3 settlement at "Colina lui Drăghici": inf. S. Țurcanu), objects lately connected with the evolution

of the Suvorovo group (in the meaning of Dergacev 1986, 67-74; Dergacev, Sorokin 1986, 54-65; Manzura 1993, 27-28; idem 1994, 94-95; Manzura, Sava 1994, 151, 155). Perhaps that conclusion about the eastern origin of these stone sceptres needs to be modified or shaded. Anyway, none of these sceptres from Moldavia originated from funeral complexes.

Not long ago, it has been estimated that Grave No. 4/ T. 2 Bolotești and Grave No. 19 / Iacobeni reflected a "certain community" with the group of burials belonging to the "Bassarabean variant of Cernavodă I culture" (a group synchronic with the stages Cucuteni A-B, B - Tripolie B2, C1) (Manzura 1993, 30; idem 1994, 99). Some of the ritual elements (the skeleton position, the shape of the pit-grave, the stone "shell" above an hypothetically primary mound), seems to approach the grave at Bolotești to the above-mentioned group, but the lack of inventory and the western orientation of the dead, forced to precaution, while, according to ornaments, technologic and morphologic principles, the pot from Grave No. 19/ Iacobeni (A. Florescu 1967, fig. 5/2; idem 1991, fig. 207/6) is virtually identical to those known from Catacomb and late Pit-Grave tombs. At the same time, we must have more tangible data to ascribe the "extended" graves from Holboca (and, especially, Grave No. 28-30) to an early period.

In spite of these, one cannot exclude the presence, especially in Southern Moldavia, of the earlier tumular burials horizons than those documented surely at present. This idea is supported by the presence of the Eneolithic tumular graves to the east of the Prut and by the fact that few tumular graves discovered in Wallachia and Dobroudja probably precede the Transition Period or are dated to the beginning of it (for instance, Grave No. 3/ T.I Vitănești, V. Leahu, Trohani 1979, 128, 133, fig. 3/1 - which, however, can be dated to the end of the Transition Period, too; Agigea: Hașotti 1997, 131, with precaution; the primary tumular graves from mounds at Independența-Murighiol: Simion 1991, Grădișteța-Coslogeni: Căvruc, Neagu 1995, 72-73, 76 and note 6, Sabangia: inf. S. Agulnikov). In T.III/ Kalugherica (Grave No. 4) and T.II/ Plačidol I, in Northeastern Bulgaria (Panajotov, Dergacev 1984, 106-111) and in the large tumular necropolis at Goran Slatina (Grave No. 9/ T.III, Grave No. 5/ T.VII, perhaps, Grave No. 13/ T.II - with extended skeleton), in North-Central Bulgaria (Kitov, Panajotov, Pavlov 1991, 57, 73-74, 95-96), there are graves which stratigraphically are older than the Pit-Grave burials, but they are with unclarified cultural-chronological attribution.

In the Middle and Late Bronze Age, between the Carpathians and the Prut, the tumular funeral behaviour is attested in a great variety at different cultural communities: Monteoru culture (Cândești, Bârsești, Odobești), Multi-Belted Pottery (Mnogovalikovaja) culture (Bogonos, Glăvăneștii Vechi, Valea Lupului, Giurcani, Bolotești, Stoicani, Vânători, Galați-*Dunărea*), Komarów-Bialy Potik-Costișa cultural complex (Horodnicu de Jos, probably Hârtop and Șerbănești), Noua-

Sabatinovka cultural complex (Găgești, Prajeni-*Țarna*). The tumular practice is traceable then up to the Middle Age.

Taking into account the origin and characteristic features of the EBA tumular necropolises in Moldavia it can be observed that they can be classified into four types: a) tumular necropolises of eastern extraction with larger earthen tumuli (H = 1,5-3 m; D = 20-40 m), often raised in several stages and containing from 1 to 10-15 graves dated to the EBA period (36 archaeological points, 46 tumuli with something more than 100 graves); b) necropolises belonging to the second stage of the Vânători-Bolotești group (one archaeological point - Bolotești/ T.2: Buzdugan et al. 1987); c) tumular necropolises belong to the Subcarpathian Corded Ware culture which contained different types of graves and, in few instances, with funeral mounds raised probably over the traces of temporary encampments (one archaeological point - Horodnicu de Jos: Szombathy 1894, 18-19; idem 1895, 22; Ignat 1981, 134-136, fig. 1/1-3); d) necropolises belong to the Monteoru culture (stage Ic4, 3, dated to the very end of the EBA period) with small earthen-, stone-, or sherds-mantled barrows, carefully built and raised in one stage for a single burial (one archaeological point - Coroteni - with 5 little cairns: Bobi 1987; idem 1992). The great part of the EBA tumular necropolises is localized in the Siret-Prut inter-fluve and only four (Horodnic, Broșteni, Bolotești and Coroteni) are situated to the west of the Siret river (see fig. 1).

Excepting the Horodnic (where Grave No. 1/ T.II - which can be attributed to the Komarów culture, too - and Grave No. 1/ T.I-1893 were cremation burials), the only mode of burial rite in the others EBA tumular necropolises is inhumation. Burials are generally individual, but there are also double (Holboca, Cotârgaci, Coroteni) and collective graves (trebles at Holboca and Stoicani, one grave, Grave No. 24/ Crasnaleuca with 4 persons and another, Grave No. 10/ Vânători with 6 skeletons). As far as character of the graves is concerned, four types of tumular graves can be distinguished, some of them with different variants: a) primary tumular graves; b) secondary tumular graves; c) graves in tumuli; d) flat graves under tumuli.

Given the fact that most of the EBA tumular graves in Moldavia are connected with the cultural groups coming from the east, our analysis will be focused on this type of tumular necropolises.

Any attempt to classify the variety of the EBA tumular graves of eastern origin in a cultural-chronological sequence becomes more difficult because the number of funeral complexes investigated is small and often the information is incomplete. In addition, most of the tumular necropolises have not been thoroughly studied. At the same time, the great part of the tumular graves are very scanty (most of them are without inventory, except for ochre). In these circumstances, the only method to obtain a clearer picture of the cultural-chronological sequence of these burials is to undertake a detailed analysis of them and to compare the results with

all possible comparative material from the neighboring areas (and especially from the Prut-Nistru region). With this end in view, I believe it necessary to make a combinatory analysis of all ritual elements from tumular burials of eastern origin starting from the estimation that within the burial customs the main component is the position of the dead in the grave. Depending on the deposition of the dead I have ordered then all the others elements of burial rite, included the grave-goods and anthropological data. Proceeding in this way it also becomes possible to compare our analysis with the similar ones proposed for neighboring areas by Al. Häusler (1976), E.V. Jarovoj (1985), V.A. Dergacev (1986), S.V. Ivanova (1990) and, at the same time, to compare the results obtained.

As regards the positions of skeletons in the EBA tumular graves of eastern origin, their classification was done according to Jarovoj's typology (Jarovoj 1985, 38-49, fig. 2), completed wherever necessary. In the Carpathians-Prut area for this kind of graves the following general positions of skeletons are specific: a) *supine position* (group I after Jarovoj) (29 single burials and 4 double and collective graves). This position is almost exclusively characteristic of the Pit-Grave (Jamnaja) culture. However, few burials belong to the Catacomb-Grave culture; b) *semi-supine position* (group II after Jarovoj) (over 10 single burials and a treble one) was practised by the Pit-Grave and Catacomb-Grave communities - in a such general position were buried also the members of the Vânători-Bolotești group (of local origin); c) *contracted position on one side* (group III after Jarovoj) (over 20 burials) - in this position were buried members of the Pit-Grave, Catacomb-Grave and Vânători-Bolotești tribes; in contracted position also were found the skeletons from the Monteoru Ic4, 3 necropolis at Coroteni and perhaps those from the Corded Ware tumuli at Horodnic; d) *extended position* (group IV after Jarovoj) (2 individual burial and a treble one) is presented only at Holboca - the tombs with the bodies in this position, probably, belonged to the Catacomb-Graves tribes; e) *with torsion of the chest* (group V, cf. our completions to Jarovoj's typology) - the only grave of this type was attributed by us, with probability, to the Pit-Grave culture; f) *reverse position* (group VI, cf. our completions to Jarovoj's typology) - in this group is included a single burial, discovered at Stoicani and belonging to the Pit-Grave or Catacomb-Grave culture.

In the case of the other burials which belonged to the EBA period, of eastern origin or not, data concerning the position of the skeletons are missing as a consequence of bad preservation of the remains, grave robbery and wrong observations.

There are no certain data about burials with deliberate dismemberment of the skeletons.

It seems that at Grivița-Galați (Grave No. 3/ T. 315: Brudiu 1987, 12) and Galați-Dunărea (idem 1985, 242, fig. 1/B) were discovered cenotaph graves, the only ones which are probably dated to the EBA (Pit-Grave culture?), for the time being.

With reference at the burials of eastern origin, within the groups of positions, different variants and types have been identified, the great part of them being attested also in the neighboring areas.

The quantitative (proportional) and comparative analysis demonstrates, in the case of group I-Jarovoj, that there is an indisputable similarity between the graves with skeletons in supine position in Moldavia and those of the same group in the Prut-Nistru region (see Jarovoj 1985, 44, 46). As regards the other groups, the analogies are less evident, first of all, because of the scanty sources.

To the west of the Prut river, in the case of single burials, group I-Jarovoj, specific to the early stage of the Pit-Grave culture, comprises 11 variants of positions which are also presented, excepting a single one, in the Prut-Nistru area. Moreover, the same variant, i.e. No. 11, is the best represented both to the west and east of the Prut. Although the number of graves is small, the 11 variants can be included in the same three types of position revealed, according to positions of the arms, at group I by E.V. Jarovoy, i.e. types 1, 11 and 15 (see *ibidem*, 46). It is interesting that few quantitative proportions are also respected, which cannot be accidental. The great part of the tombs of group I were primary or secondary tumular graves which explain their constant position in the centre of the barrows. A comparison of this element between all six groups of positions practised by the EBA eastern population in Moldavia led to the conclusion that communities (especially Pit-Grave) using the position of group I were here the main builders of the barrows.

The semi-supine position (group II-Jarovoj) is a characteristic one (in the main, specific to the late stage of the Pit-Grave culture) and it cannot be confused with the contracted position on one side. At present, the small number of graves with the skeletons in the position of group II discovered in Moldavia prevents any conclusion resulting from a comparison with the graves of group II analysed by E.V. Jarovoj (see *ibidem*, 46-48). We confine ourselves to mention the presence of semi-supine position in the EBA tumular graves of eastern origin in Moldavia, a logical one given the fact that it exists, in the same type of burials, in the neighboring areas (besides Bassarabia, in Wallachia, Oltenia, Bulgaria, Vojvodina).

To the west of the Prut the group III-Jarovoj includes 5 variants of positions and 2 main types. As in Bassarabia, type 50-Jarovoj (with skeletons in contracted position on the left) is much better represented than type 45-Jarovoj (with skeletons in contracted position on the right). Most of the eastern burials belonging to group III are, in Moldavia, graves in tumuli and they belong to the late stage of the Pit-Grave or to the Catacomb-Grave culture.

The only EBA tumular burials with the skeletons in extended position were discovered in the Holboca kurgan (Grave No. 28-30, 33, 36: Zirra 1952, 99 sqq., fig. 7, 10; Comşa 1985, 151-157, fig. 6; 7/1, 4) and they might have belonged to the Catacomb tribes (Burtănescu 1996, 100). If this assumption is correct, then we

will have proved to the west of the Prut too, with Catacomb communities, the custom of burying the dead in an extended position, which is predominant among the Catacomb graves in north and north-western pontic area (Bratčenko, Šapošnikova 1985, 416; Dergacev 1986, 98, fig. 22/B; Toščev 1990, 118) or in Wallachia. Generally, this position is characteristic for the western part of the Catacomb area in the late stage of Catacomb cultural complex evolution (Toščev 1991, 89). It is also interesting that in Moldavia the graves with typical Catacomb-Grave funeral inventory have the skeletons in the positions of groups I and III, while the "extended" burials from Holboca are without grave goods.

Here, too, was discovered the only grave (No. 16: Comșa 1985, 148, fig. 3/2) with the skeleton with torsion of the chest (group V-Burtănescu), which can be attributed, with restraint, to the Pit-Grave culture. In this case it's very possible that the position of the body was not the initial one because the position of group V is not specific to Pit-Grave tribes. However, the grave under discussion can belong to the Multi-Belted Pottery, too.

In Moldavia, just a single burial had the skeleton in a reverse position, namely Grave No.13/ Stoicani-*Cetățuie* (Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1953, 124-125, fig. 55/13) and it belonged to the Pit-Grave or, more probably, to the Catacomb-Grave communities. Similar graves were discovered in the kurgans from Bassarabia (Cotiujeni, Svetlyj, Zareč'e, Dubăsarii Vechi, Taraclia, Fricăței) and Wallachia (Ploiești-Triaj). Frequently, these tombs were accompanied by graves in which the skeletons were in identical, but normal position, forming in this way a pair of similar, but inverted positions.

As regards the crouching degree of the skeletons in the eastern origin graves it was taken into account both thighbone-shank angle and thighbone-spinal column angle. In the first parameter a gradual increase of crouching from group I to groups II and III (see fig. 2/4-6) was observed. In this respect, there is a marked similarity with the same parameter analysed for the tumular graves in the Prut-Nistru area (Jarovoj 1985, 50, fig. 5, 6, tab. 2). In the case of the crouching degree of the body, there can be observed a hardly increased tendency of crouching from groups I and II to group III (see fig. 2/7-8), i.e. a passage from a thin degree to a middle degree.

Only with group I the analysis of orientation can offer relevant conclusions. Thus, in the case of the primary tumular graves, western orientation dominates (see, fig. 3/4). Since burials of group I are mostly connected with the bearers of the Pit-Grave culture, it can be assumed that, as regards the prevalence of western orientation in the primary tumular burials to these tribes, the situation in the Carpathians-Prut area is absolutely identical with that revealed in the other regions of spread of the Pit-Grave culture (Middle Dnieper region: Šapošnikova 1985, 348; Bassarabia: Dergacev 1994, 124-125; Eastern Hungary: Ecsedy 1979, 35, 41-43). At Coroteni, western orientation predominates, as well as in the grave of the

Vânători-Bolotești group.

In the case of the EBA tumular graves of eastern origin in Moldavia there is no link between a certain type of grave-pit and a certain mode of deposition of the dead. The grave-pits are predominantly rectangular with rounded (especially with group I) and straight corners or with irregular sides. The oval- and trapezoidal-shaped pits are less frequent. We have only few mentions about the step-like grave-pits. So far, in the Carpathians-Prut area there are no data about Catacomb-like grave-pits among the Catacomb-Grave burials. Sometimes, the bottom of the grave-pits was paved with stone slabs (Broșteni and Vânători) or plastered with clay (Holboca). In the Monteoru Ic4, 3 necropolis at Coroteni the large oval- or rectangular-shaped pits were plated with river stones. The graves attributed to the second stage of the Vânători-Bolotești group from T. 2 Bolotești (Graves No. 7, 9, 10, 12) had the rectangular-shaped grave-pits with rounded corners.

In the case of 13 graves, most of them belonging to the Pit-Grave culture, these were covered by a roof-shaped wooden construction made of beams, planks or branches. In the Grave No. 13/ Vânători (Brudiu 1985, 237-238) and Grave No. 7/ T.III Prăjeni-*Alimândra* (inf. N. Ursulescu) (both belonged to the Pit-grave culture) were discovered poles who supported these wooden constructions.

Excepting the Coroteni necropolis, the employment of stones for covering the grave is not attested among the EBA tumular burials in the area under discussion. In tumular Graves No. 2 at Chersăcosu (jud. Vaslui; discovery V. Merlan, 1994), belonging to a 3 years old child (Pit-Grave culture, the early stage), the pit was covered with a primitive stone stelae.

Ochre (mainly red) is a ritual phenomenon specific, mostly, to the tumular burials of eastern origin and it occurs in the graves in the following forms: a) staining with different intensity of the skeleton or certain parts of it (especially skulls); b) scattering over the bottom of grave-pit or over the skeletons; c) lumps of ochre placed in the grave, more frequently near skull and shoulders (in two cases, Grave No. 5/ Larga Jijia: Alexandrescu 1952, 55 and Grave No. 17/ T.I-1949 Glăvăneștii Vechi: Comșa 1987b, even under the skull). In a case, ochre was placed inside of a miniatural dish (Grivița-Galați: Brudiu 1987, 12) as in some tumular graves at Seaca de Câmpie (Oltenia) (Dumitrescu 1944, 43). Appeared as a rule only with the red ochre, the yellow one was discovered especially in the primary burials (Ripiceni, Glăvăneștii Vechi, Valea Lupului). A better frequency of the ochre employment can be observed with the graves of group I, while in group III its presence is quite low, both quantitatively and morphologically. In the EBA graves of T.2 Bolotești, the ochre was scattered especially near the legs of the dead, while at Coroteni the ochre is missing.

In the majority of group I of the EBA burials the traces of a vegetable-fibre spread or mat can be found on the bottom of the pit or over the skeleton. At

Corlăteni-Dealul Cetății Grave No. 1 (group I), a vegetable spread covered the grave-pit (Tudor, Vulpe 1953, 411).

There is evidence of burial spots or even hearths associated sometimes with charcoal, ashes, sherds and burned animal bones on the original surfaces, near the primary tumular graves (Pit-Grave culture, Corded Ware culture). Few such a hearths (for instance, those discovered under tumuli 314 and 315 at Grivița-Galați: Brudiu 1987, 12-13) were quite strong, which demonstrates that they have been used for a long time. The same is the situation with the hearths discovered under Pit-Grave tumuli at Luncavița (*Movila Mocuța*: Vasiliu 1995a, 93) and at Mihai Bravu (T.1: idem 1995b, 144) in Dobroudja. In T.2 Bolotești, near the pits belonging to the EBA graves, were discovered ceramic fragments from ritual broken vessels, while at Coroteni such sherds formed, together with stones, little mounds above the children burials.

The majority of the tumular graves in the region under discussion belonged to the Pit-Grave culture (80-90 graves).

Generally, the western border of the Pit-Grave culture is the Siret river. There are, as yet, seldom infiltrations to the west of this river, in the Southern part of the Suceava Plateau and in the Northern part of the Moldavian Subcarpathians, favoured probably by environmental conditions, as demonstrates the Pit-Grave tumular tomb at Broșteni (Ciurea 1921, 25; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1950, 117-118, fig. 1/c, d) and the flat graves No. 1 and 2, at least, from settlement at Târpești, which judging from certain elements (the skeleton positions, non-ceramic inventory, anthropological data) (Marinescu-Bîlcu 1964; eadem 1981, 89-95, fig. 205-207), it seems that they have belonged to individuals of eastern origin, coming in contact with the native population.

Generally, to the west of the Prut, this culture followed the classical period of the Foltești and Cernavodă II groups, as demonstrates the stratigraphical evidence from the tumuli at Vânători and Grivița - *Movila Arbănașu*, in Southeastern Moldavia (Brudiu 1985, 235-240; idem 1996), but the first Pit-Grave burials are a little earlier. In the tumuli from Northeastern Moldavia there are evidence that between the graves dated to the Horodiștea period and those belonging to the Pit-Grave period a short (?) cultural-chronological period dated to the end of Transition Period is interposed and represented by tumular graves with extended skeletons (see the stratigraphical data from Corlăteni-Dealul Stădole kurgan: Comșa 1982, 85-93; idem 1987a, 121-124). This assumption is also supported by the stratigraphical evidence from few tumuli unearthed in Northern Bessarabia (Dumeni, Văratec, Duruitorii Noi, Ocnița), but also in the Bugeac region (Kočkovoate, Kubej, Nerușaj-?, Želtyj Jar, Alexandrovka), in most cases the graves with extended skeletons similar of that at Corlăteni were interposed between the late Tripolje tombs and Pit-Grave funeral complexes. In Northwestern

pontic area, the appearance of this horizon restore in question the problem of the cultural-chronological relations between the Usatovo and Pit-Grave communities.

On the basis of burial features (included the grave inventory) and stratigraphical data compared to the archaeological evidence from neighboring areas, it can be supposed that between the Siret and the Prut, the Pit-Grave funeral monuments are divided into two main chronological stages: the early and the late. The first stage coincides, on a general plan, with the penetration and expansion of the Pit-Grave communities in the entire north-pontic area, and from here, using the Danube valley and its tributaries up to the Upper Thracian Lowlands, central Transylvania and eastern Hungary, followed immediately by desintegration of the Pit-Grave cultural massive and cultural contacts and influences of different intensity with the indigenous population, resulting in the appearance of specific cultural complexes (see Roman 1986, 32-33; Dergacev 1986, 80-81; idem 1989, 135-136; Panajotov 1990, 99-100).

In the Siret-Prut area this early stage seems to be divided, as in the Prut-Nistru region, into two or three chronological horizons, however hardly distinguished as yet on the archaeological sources. Grave No. 10/ Vânători (Brudiu 1985, 237, fig. 2/2), with an ovoid-shaped vessel and skeletons with eastern orientation and Grave No.2/ Chersăcosu, with a primitive limestone stelae and skeleton oriented to the WNW, might have belonged, with restraint, to the earliest horizon of the penetration Jamnaja in the Balkan peninsula (represented, for instances, by the Grave No.3/ T.II Goljama Detelina - who preceded a group of burials with ceramic materials specific to the Ezero A stage: Kănčev 1995, 37; Leštakov, Popova 1995, 68-72 -, and M 3/ T.I Târnovo), but generally, the classic period of the Pit-Grave culture in Moldavia (divided into two sequences or horizons) is represented by primary tumular graves with skeletons in the position of group I-Jarovoij and in western oriented one with remarkably poor grave goods. Pottery (jars, cups), ornaments (metal earrings, cylindric bone beads) (see fig. 4/1, 4-7, 11-12) and especially ritual elements are closely related to the classic stage of the Pit-Grave culture or Nistrean variant of the same culture in Bassarabia (after Dergacev's terminology: Dergacev 1986, 74-82). Specific, for the time being, is the absence to the west of Prut of the wooden wheels of chariots in the graves of the Pit-Grave culture (to the east of Prut they appeared in the graves specific to the late horizon of the classic Pit-Grave period). The occurrence of this item in the neighboring areas (in the Bugeac steppe, about in 15 burials; in Grave No. 1/ T.I Plačidol I, Northeastern Bulgaria: Panajotov, Dergacev 1984, 104, fig. 1-4) makes us believe that its absence in Romania is accidental. The presence of corded decorated *Fußschalen* of eastern origin in Moldavia (Grivița-Galați and Corlăteni-Dealul Cetății) and their lack, as far as we know, in north-pontic area is curious.

The massive penetration to the west of the Prut river of the Pit-Grave tribes (which coincides with the first horizon of their classic period) determined, in South-

eastern Moldavia, the cessation of the Foltești settlement (the Foltești III-Roman and post-Usatovo moment) and, perhaps a little later, in Eastern-central Moldavia, that of the Erbiceni-Hăbășești group. The push of local population in the regions mostly to the west of the Siret river saves the north-pontic shepherds routes. Only here we will find the EBA groups or cultural aspects founded on the local ground (the second stage of the Vânători-Bolotești group, Dolhești-Târpești settlements - derived from the Erbiceni-Hăbășești group -, Bogdănești cultural aspect - a variant of the Zăbala-Schneckenberg A phenomenon with the participation of the Foltești elements -, the graves of type Aldești-Gârceni - with predecessors in the flat necropolises of the Transition Period in Eastern-central Moldavia - and, in Wallachia, Cățelu Nou discovery - with a strong Foltești component). The same is the situation with the Cernavodă II population, forced to move to central Wallachia and to Western Black Sea coast, its cultural traditions will be found subsequent again here integrated in the Glina culture (Roman 1976, 38, 41) and Ezerovo II (idem 1982a, 407), the latter one constituted as an EBA cultural phenomenon as a result of colonisation with the groups arrived from the Northwestern Anatolia.

The early stage of the Pit-Grave culture in Moldavia generally belongs to the final stage of the 2nd and 3rd chronological periods of the Jamnaja culture in the periodisation done by A.V. Nikolova (A. Nikolova 1994, 93), corresponding with the EBA stage I in Romania, according to P. Roman's chronology (Roman 1986, 30-31) (see also, Manzura 1992, 95) and with the EBA II period in Bulgaria, according to I. Panajotov's (Panajotov 1992, 87-88) and L. Nikolova's (L. Nikolova 1994, 130) chronology. In Moldavia, this Pit-Grave stage can be synchronized with the Dolhești-Târpești settlements, the graves of type Aldești-Gârceni, the Bogdănești cultural aspect and with the second stage of the Vânători-Bolotești group. The earliest horizon of the Pit-Grave penetrations to the west of the Prut is contemporary, probably, with the late Horodiștea, the final Usatovo, Foltești II - Roman-Cernavodă II and with Orlea-Sadovec - Coțofeni I, preceding the beginning of the Ezerovo settlement and that of the Glina culture.

It seems that the spreading area of the tumular graves belonging to the late Pit-Grave stage in Moldavia is smaller than the early one. Most burials are secondary and, as a rule, the dead were placed in position characteristics of the groups II and III. The funeral inventory is richer. The funeral complexes are through the ritual elements and grave goods (Pl. 4/2-3,9) identical with those belonging to the late Pit-Grave period (after Jarovoj's terminology: Jarovoj 1991) or Bugeac variant of the same culture (after Dergačev's terminology: Dergacev 1986, 82-87) in Basarabia. Grave No. 2/ Vlădești contained a "Bugeac type" cup and a copper bracelet (Brudiu 1991, 19), similar ones with those revealed to the east of the Prut. There are graves denoting the cultural interaction with the others EBA cultural manifestations (for instance, Grave No. 22/ Valea Lupului-*Fabrica Chimică*: Dinu

1959b, 205-207, fig. 3, 4). The late stage of the Pit-Grave culture can be included in the 4th chronological period in the evolution of the Pit-Grave culture, according to the A.V. Nikolova's periodisation (A. Nikolova 1994, 93-94) and is contemporary with the Schneckenberg B and Jigodin finds in Moldavia (the Onești Depression, Mândrișca, Hăbășești) and, generally, with the EBA stage II, according to P. Roman's chronology (Roman 1986, 31).

The presence of the Catacomb-Grave culture to the west of the Prut - dated to the second part of the EBA and, perhaps, to the beginning of the MBA periods - is out of doubt. So far, in Moldavia there have been discovered 17 tumular graves which belonged to the Catacomb-Grave culture. Finds of the culture under discussion represent a quite narrow strip along the right bank of the Prut river, being more numerous, for the time being, in the Northeastern Moldavia. The greatest tumular cemetery was discovered at Holboca. At present, in Moldavia there are no flat graves as in Bassarabia, Wallachia (Brăilița, Lișcoteanca), Dobroudja (Sarichioi), Lower Dnieper and other lands of the Catacomb-Grave spread (see Toščev 1994). The burials are secondary, but there are two graves on which new mounds were raised (Grave No. 2/ Galați-*Dunărea* and probably, Grave No. 19/ Iacobenii). The skeletons are lying in extended, supine (included the "running man" position), semi-supine and on the side positions. The pottery and stone weapons from Catacomb graves in Moldavia (Pl. 7/1-10) and Wallachia (Pl. 7/11-12) are closely related to those from Catacomb-Grave culture in Bassarabia and, generally, from the late variants or cultures belonging to the Catacomb-Grave cultural unity (see fig. 8, 9). There are in Moldavia features different from those known in the Prut-Nistru area, for instance, the absence of catacomb-like pits and a low frequency of graves with skeletons in extended position, but they are probably due to the stage of researches. However, it is obvious that the Catacomb graves to the west of the Prut are directly analogous to the Catacomb-Graves culture in Bassarabia and easily fall into it. Owing to the different deposition of the dead, a certain sequence of the Catacomb graves in Moldavia can be only presumed, a specification more precise of it being impossible as yet. However, we cannot exclude the existence at the same time, therefore contemporaneous, of a different ritual groups belonging to the Catacomb-Grave circle. The typical funeral inventory proves that the mutual relations with the Carpathians cultures are reduced because of the Late Pit-Grave population acting as an original barrier (Toščev 1986, 105; idem 1991, 97). The latter, due to the migration of the Catacomb tribes, moved westwards producing, probably, some disturbance in the Glina area, in a moment corresponding probably with the stage Glina III-Roman (Roman 1982b, 47; idem 1986, 42, 45).

The anthropological studies proved the morphological affinity of the builders of the Pit-Grave and Catacomb-Grave tumular graves of Romania and

especially of Moldavia with similar one, of the steppes (Necrasov 1973, 8; Necrasov, Cristescu 1979, 101; Bălteanu 1989, 230).

The second stage of the Vânători-Bolotești group is represented, for the time being, only at Bolotești/ T. 2, through graves with skeletons in semi-supine positions on the left side, oriented to the west and with 1-2 vessels (jugs, jars, cups) (fig. 5/5-9) as grave-goods. Typologically, the ceramic material is younger than the Transition Period and the analogies with the pottery discovered in the "eastern" graves show that this stage of the Vânători-Bolotești group can be dated not only to the classic Jamnaja period but also later. If the roots of the group under discussion are to be found in the Transition Period, then, culturally, this is rather closer to Cernavodă II than to Foltești group.

With precaution, we believe that the cremation tumular graves No. 1/ T.I-1893, 1/ T.II-1976 and the inhumation ones, No. 2/ T.I-1893 and T.II-1893 from Horodnicu de Jos can be attributed to the Subcarpathian Corded Ware culture. The funeral inventory, ceramics, stone and flint artefacts, perhaps, also, an amber rectangular-shaped plate, discovered here at the end of the 19th century, was lost. For the time being, the precise dating of the Corded Ware tumuli at Horodnic is uncertain and a relation to the Subcarpathian Corded Ware stages revealed for the Western Ukraina is not possible.

As far as the Monteoru IC4, 3 necropolis at Coroteni is concerned, it is obvious that the little mounds from here are quite different, as a construction, in comparison with the large earthen tumuli of eastern origin. This type of funeral monument, i.e. the little cairn, will be transmitted to the next phases of the Monteoru culture, as demonstrates the evidence from of the necropolises (see M. Florescu 1978).

The data on the tumular burials are the most important source for the EBA period in Moldavia, especially between the Siret and the Prut river, further researches on this period here must focus on this kind of archaeological monuments.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| AIM | - Archeologičeskie issledovanija v Moldavii, Chișinău. |
| AMM | - Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis. Anuarul Muzeului județean de istorie, Vaslui. |
| ARA | - Annuaire roumaine d'anthropologie, București. |
| Archeologija - Kiev | - Archeologija, Institut Archeologij, Kiev. |
| BAR | - British Archaeological Reports, Oxford. |
| CA | - Cercetări arheologice. Muzeul Național de Istorie. București. |
| Carpica | - Carpica. Muzeul de Istorie și artă, Bacău. |
| CCDJ | - Cultură și civilizație la Dunărea de Jos. Muzeul Dunării de Jos, Călărași. |
| Dacia N.S. | - Dacia. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București. |
| DSPK | - Drevnosti stepnogo Pričernomor'ja i Kryma, Zaporož'e. |
| Hierasus | - Hierasus. Anuarul muzeului județean, Botoșani. |
| IASZP | - Issledovanija po archeologii Severo - Zapadnogo Pričernomor'ja, Kiev, 1985. |
| JBLM | - Jahrbuch des Bukowiner Landes-Museums, Czernowitz. |
| Materiale | - Materiale și cercetări arheologice, București. |
| Materiale-Ploiești | - Materiale și cercetări arheologice. A XVII-a Sesiune anuală de rapoarte, Ploiești, 1983, București, 1992. |
| MemAntiq | - Memoria Antiquitatis. Acta Musei Petrodavensis, Piatra Neamț. |
| MIA JuZ SSSR i RNR | - Materialy i issledovanija po archeologii Jugo-Zapada SSSR i Rumynskoj Narodnoj Respubliki, Chișinău, 1960 |
| MuzNat | - Muzeul Național, București. |
| Peuce | - Peuce. Muzeul "Delta Dunării", Tulcea. |
| PZ | - Prähistorische Zeitschrift, Leipzig-Berlin. |

Raport MNA SCIV(A)	- Raportul Muzeului Național de Antichități, București. - Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie), București.
SC-Vrancea	- Studii și comunicări. Vrancea. Muzeul Județean de istorie și etnografie, Focșani.
Studia Praehistorica	- Studia Praehistorica. Institut Archeologij Bolgarskoj Akademii Nauk, Sofia.
Symposium Donji Milanovac	- Hügelbestattung in der Karpaten-Donau-Balkan-zone während der äneolithischen Periode, Internationales Symposium, Donji Milanovac, september 1985, Belgrad,
	1987.
SympThrac	- Symposia Thracologica, Institutul Român de Tracologie, București.
Thraco-Dacica	- Thraco-Dacica. Institutul Român de Tracologie, București.

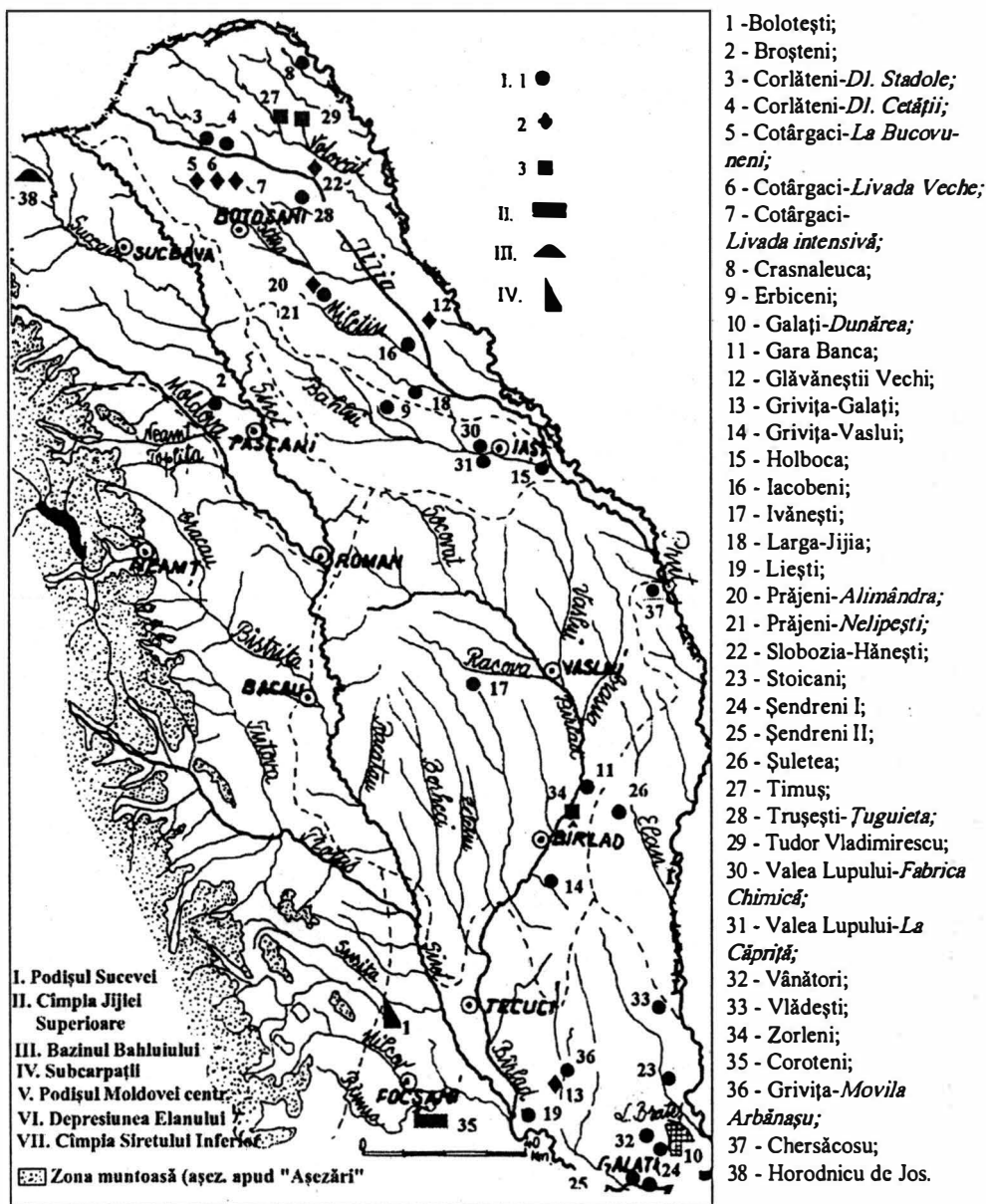


Fig. 1. The map of the EBA tumular necropolises in Moldavia. I. Tumular necropolises of oriental origin. 1. -tumuli, 2. -groups of tumuli, 3. - tumuli with uncertain discoveries. II. Tumular necropolis belongs to Monteoru Ic4,3 culture. III. Tumular necropolis belongs to Subcarpathian Corded ware culture. IV. Tumular necropolis belongs to the second stage of the Vânători-Bolotești group.