

A RHOMBOIDAL CLAY PLATE FROM IEPUREȘTI – LA ISLAZ (GIURGIU COUNTY)

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Abstract: The paper presents an incomplete, undecorated, burned rhomboidal clay plate discovered in the Gumelnița A1 settlement at Iepurești – La Islaz (Giurgiu County). Its importance relies on the fact it is one of the two westernmost known artefacts of the kind, discovered far from the main bulk of such finds in northern Muntenia, southern Moldavia, southern Moldova and southern Ukraine. The plate is discussed in the context of other similar items. Current interpretations relate them to the presence of rhomboidal decorations on certain female figurines.

Cuvinte-cheie: placă decorativă, romb, lut, Gumelnița A1

Rezumat: Articolul prezintă un fragment de plăcuță din lut ars, nedecorată, de formă rombică, descoperit în cadrul așezării Gumelnița A1 de la Iepurești – La Islaz (jud. Giurgiu). Artefactul este important deoarece este unul din cele două exemplare cele mai vestice, descoperite la o distanță apreciabilă de majoritatea pieselor similare, identificate în nordul Munteniei, sudul Moldovei, sudul Republicii Moldova și sudul Ucrainei. Plăcuța este discutată în contextul celorlalte descoperiri similare și a interpretărilor curente care le leagă de unele figurine feminine ce au reprezentat pe ele un decor romboidal.

INTRODUCTION

The site of Iepurești – *La Islaz* is located in southern Romania, approximately 30 km south-west of Bucharest, in the basin of the Neajlov River, between the villages of Stâlpu and Iepurești (Giurgiu County) (Fig. 1). It has been investigated on a yearly basis from 2007 to 2013. As it will be seen below, it is important that the first two excavation seasons were conducted by two different archaeologists (2007 – A. Mocanu and 2008 – I. Gheorghe), while the following ones (2009–2013) by the author of this paper. The different field directors, different teams, and different excavation and recording techniques triggered subsequently some unfortunate loss of information.

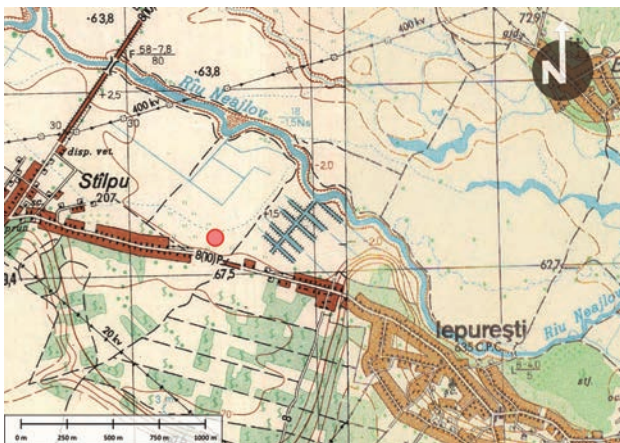


Figure 1. Location of the site (red circle).

Only a few papers have been published so far on the results of the excavations (Markussen, Vornicu 2011; Morintz 2011; Morintz, Kogălniceanu 2012; Kogălniceanu et alii 2012; 2014; Ilie, Kogălniceanu 2023). Only the northern part of what was believed initially to be a *tell*-type settlement was investigated. The materials indicated the existence of a Gumelnița settlement (A1 phase – see Ilie, Kogălniceanu 2023) overlapped by a Bronze Age Glina occupation layer.

A comprehensive synthesis on the topic of clay plates was published by S. Pandrea (2001), that also brought forward the discovery of several decorated items further south of their expected area of occurrence, in Bulgaria. Following his overview, the topic made the subject of two presentations at the Pontica 56 conference in 2003 (Mistreanu 2003 and Pandrea 2003 – *non vidi*), while only one more clay plate was published (Mirea 2007).

THE ARTEFACT AND ITS CONTEXT

Our clay plate (collection inventory no. 086) was discovered in my first field campaign (2009), in Sector S1, □ A1–2/B1, between -0.75 and -1.00 m. The contextual data is unclear particularly because the item was discovered during the excavation of one corner of S1 (left unfinished by the previous field director) and the enlargement of the section by 0.40 m towards the north (Fig. 2 and 3). What can be said with certainty is that, given the depth and the pottery associated with it, it can be attributed to the Gumelnița A1 cultural level.