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BEYOND CULTURAL GROUPS RETHINKING HORED'T'S CULTURAL GROUPING SYSTEM IN EARLY MEDIEVAL TRANSYLVANIA

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Keywords: Transylvania, Kurt Horedt, cultural groups, ethnicity, Early Middle Ages, cemetery classification

Abstract: The Transylvanian region between the 7th and 11th centuries was marked by the presence of multiple ethnically and culturally diverse communities living side by side. Although these populations shared certain archaeological characteristics and funerary practices, notable distinctions led researchers to establish a classification framework for differentiating cemetery groups. Developed primarily by Kurt Horedt, this framework organised the region into several groups – Mediaș, Gâmbaș, Blandiana, Ciombrud and Cluj – according to key burial sites, as well as their presumed ethnic and chronological attributes. In this study, we reexamine these groups by focusing on the circumstances and motivations behind their formation, while also assessing the broader impact of this methodological approach on the study of the period and the region. Furthermore, the paper addresses continuing debates surrounding previously discovered cemeteries and their classification within this system and considers possible avenues for methodological refinement and the reassessment of earlier interpretations.

Cuvinte-cheie: Transilvania, Kurt Horedt, grupuri culturale, etnie, Evul Mediu timpuriu, clasificarea cimitirelor

Rezumat: Regiunea Transilvaniei din secolele VII–XI s-a caracterizat prin coexistența mai multor comunități distincte din punct de vedere etnic și cultural. Deși aceste populații prezentau anumite asemănări în ce privește patrimoniul arheologic și practicile funerare, diferențele semnificative au determinat cercetătorii să elaboreze un cadru de clasificare pentru diferențierea grupurilor de cimitire. Dezvoltat în principal de Kurt Horedt, acest sistem a organizat regiunea în mai multe grupuri – Mediaș, Gâmbaș, Blandiana, Ciombrud și Cluj – pe baza principalelor situri funerare, precum și a caracteristicilor etnice și cronologice presupuse. În acest studiu, reexaminăm aceste grupuri concentrându-ne asupra circumstanțelor și motivelor care au stat la baza formării lor, evaluând totodată impactul mai larg al acestei abordări metodologice asupra cercetării perioadei și regiunii. De asemenea, lucrarea abordează dezbaterile încă existente privind cimitirele descoperite anterior și încadrarea lor în acest sistem, analizând posibile direcții pentru rafinarea metodologiei și reevaluarea interpretărilor anterioare.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the undeniable characteristics of the Transylvanian territories is that several populations with different cultural backgrounds lived side by side during the same period. Although numerous similarities can be observed in the archaeological heritage and burial customs of these groups, significant differences are also evident; therefore, from an archaeological perspective, it became necessary to establish a system that would allow these cemeteries to be distinguished from one another. As a result, a classification framework emerged which, in certain respects, resembles the differentiation of prehistoric archaeological cultures. Within the region, the following units were identified: the Mediaș, Gâmbaș, Blandiana, Ciombrud, Nușfalău and Cluj groups. This classification system was developed by Kurt Horedt, whose work continues to play a decisive role in current research¹.

Contemporary scholarly debates primarily focus on determining to which group certain cemeteries – especially newly discovered ones – should be assigned. According to the methodological principles underlying this classification,

the names of the groups refer to the most significant archaeological sites associated with a given population and were attributed the following ethnic and chronological meanings: the Mediaș group includes the 6th–8th century biritual and cremation Slavic cemeteries; the Nușfalău group comprises the 8th century Slavic tumulus cemeteries²; the Gâmbaș group represents the 7th–8th century Avar heritage of Transylvania; the Blandiana group is associated with the 9th century Bulgarian finds; the Ciombrud group includes 9th–10th century Moravian or Bulgarian burials; while the Cluj group encompasses the 10th–11th century burials of the conquering Hungarians. In addition, to provide a more nuanced picture, researchers often discuss the Blandiana group in parallel with the Dridu or Danubian-Balkan culture, while the Cluj group is frequently connected to the Bijelo Brdo culture. In our analysis, we examine these groups, focusing on the circumstances and motivations behind

¹ Horedt 1986, p. 59–87.

² Although the Nușfalău group constitutes one of the Horedt's classification system, it is not discussed in detail in the present study. The research focuses primarily on Central and Southern Transylvania, whereas the Nușfalău cemeteries are concentrated in the northwestern part of the region. Their inclusion would have substantially broadened the geographical scope of the analysis and diverted attention from the microregional framework adopted here.

their emergence, as well as the impact this methodological framework has had on the study of both the period and the region. First, we investigate the research history of these groups, together with the major scholarly questions and problems associated with them. The chronological focus of the research is primarily directed toward the 8th–11th centuries.

2. MEDIAȘ GROUP

The group derives its name from the cemetery located at Mediaș – *Dealul Furcilor*, excavated between 1960 and 1961 (Pl. I). In the Mediaș cemetery, alongside cremation burials, a small number of inhumation graves were also identified; consequently, Horedt interpreted the site as a biritual cemetery³. In the following years, an increasing number of cemeteries with a similar structure were uncovered (such as Ocna Sibiului⁴ and Bratei II⁵), where both burial rites were attested within the same burial ground, leading to the rapid spread and acceptance of the term⁶. According to current data, approximately twenty cemeteries from this period can now be assigned to this group. Over time, however, the definition of the group broadened to include cemeteries containing exclusively cremation burials⁷. As a result, the need emerged to distinguish separate subgroups within the main category: on the one hand, cemeteries containing exclusively cremation burials, and on the other, biritual cemeteries⁸.

In contrast to other identified groups, the Mediaș-type cemeteries were distributed across a much wider area, from the region of the Someșul Mic River to the Olt Valley⁹, extending their boundaries toward central Transylvania and in the northern territories – if the available data are reliable – as far as the valley of the Bistrița River¹⁰. Consequently, criticism has increasingly emerged in scholarly discourse regarding the terminology of the Mediaș group, primarily because it does not exclusively include biritual cemeteries and, secondly, because it is not confined solely to the examined region, as similar phenomena can also be observed across a much broader geographical area¹¹. Within Transylvania, however, the cemeteries are concentrated mainly in two regions: the Mureș–Târnava area and the microregion of the Someșul Mic. Since a comprehensive overview of the entire group would exceed the geographical scope of the present study, the detailed analysis will focus only on the cemeteries situated in the Mureș Valley and the neighbouring Târnava region. In terms of burial rite, only cremation burials occur

in the following cemeteries: Uioare de Jos, Șeica Mică, Păuca, and Turdaș. The biritual cemeteries include Berghin, Bratei, Alba Iulia – *Stația de Salvare*, Boarta, Mediaș, Ghirbom – *Gruia Fierului*, and Ocna Sibiului.

The question arises as to what may properly be defined as a biritual cemetery. According to Țiplic's definition¹², which is similar to that of Zábojník¹³ – who examined the Avar cemeteries of present-day Slovakia – birituality refers to the simultaneous practice of both burial rites within the same community. The evaluation of the Mediaș site is of particular importance, since it has been used in scholarship as the first documented evidence of biritual cemeteries. Nevertheless, more detailed examinations call for greater caution. Horedt – who also directed the excavation of the cemetery – regarded the evidence for birituality as lying in the fact that burials of the two different rites occurred at the same depth and that the inhumation and cremation graves fit coherently within the internal structure of the cemetery. If only these observations are taken into account, the contemporaneity of the burials indeed appears plausible. The situation, however, is not so straightforward. The three inhumation burials uncovered in the cemetery were oriented northwest–southeast, and none of the graves contained grave goods. Inhumation grave no. 11 lies at a relatively great distance from the grave rows, which were generally arranged in two lines, and therefore does not necessarily indicate a close connection with the other burials. Furthermore, the cemetery plan may not entirely reflect the actual situation, while the descriptions of the other two inhumation burials also reveal problematic features. In the case of grave no. 4 – which had been partially disturbed by work activity prior to excavation – a vessel or urn was observed directly beside and at a higher level than the skeleton of a *maturus*-aged male. It remains unclear whether this represented a separate cremation burial or a grave good belonging to the inhumation burial¹⁴. Due to the lack of precise observations, neither interpretation can be conclusively proven. In grave no. 5, urn no. 9 was found beside the pelvis and left forearm of the skeleton at the same depth level. The cemetery plan, however, is inaccurate in this respect, as it depicts them as two separate units, despite the written descriptions suggesting otherwise. In this sense, the cemetery plan should rather be regarded as an interpretation than as a fully objective representation. According to Horedt, the identical depth and immediate proximity suggest that the burials involving differing rites took place simultaneously. In his opinion, the inhumation grave may have belonged to a man, while the cremation burial belonged to a woman, although no definitive evidence supports this interpretation. Nevertheless, he considered the close spatial relationship between the urn and the skeleton to indicate contemporaneity, since they could only have been

³ Horedt 1965, p. 7–22.

⁴ Protase 2005.

⁵ Zaharia 1977.

⁶ Horedt 1986, p. 60–66.

⁷ Țiplic, Tomagea 2016, p. 10–13.

⁸ Tomagea 2012, p. 12.

⁹ Gáll *et alii* 2020, p. 148.

¹⁰ Țiplic 2005, p. 10.

¹¹ Stanciu 2015, p. 125.

¹² Țiplic, Țiplic 2014, p. 175.

¹³ Zábojník 2004, p. 339.

¹⁴ Horedt 1965, p. 8–9.

placed so close together if the exact location of each burial had been known.

The observations made in relation to graves no. 4 and 5 are not necessarily precise due to the excavation conditions, the documented weather circumstances, and other factors. Neither the pits of the urn burials nor those of the inhumation burials could be clearly delineated, and therefore the possibility of stratigraphic overlap between the grave pits cannot be excluded. In the absence of precise observations, neither Horedt's interpretation nor the opposing viewpoint can be fully demonstrated. Furthermore, the determination of contemporaneity is complicated by the fact that none of the inhumation burials contained finds, making their more precise dating and cultural attribution particularly difficult. This observation, however, is not entirely new, since Horedt himself emphasised that *"the occurrence of skeletons and urns within the same area does not in itself imply contemporaneity, as the applied rites may reflect two different chronological phases of the cemetery"*¹⁵. It therefore appears that, based on the archaeological evidence, the question remains far more open than has generally been acknowledged in scholarly interpretation.

In the 136-grave cemetery at Ocna Sibiului, 15 inhumation burials were identified, representing approximately 11% of the cemetery¹⁶. A more detailed examination of the inhumation burials raises numerous uncertainties. The problem stems from the fact that the inhumation graves do not form a coherent and clearly definable group, either on the basis of their orientation, grave goods or their level of documentation. Within the cemetery, a distinct group can be identified consisting primarily of child burials (graves 22, 23, 24, 32, 89, and 116), in which vessels were placed as grave goods. The excavators associated these vessels with the pottery found in the cremation burials. At the same time, however, no detailed typological analysis of the pottery or investigation of its precise parallels was undertaken; consequently, it cannot be conclusively demonstrated whether the same ceramic tradition is truly represented, or whether we are merely dealing with general Early Medieval forms and decorative motifs. In the case of the jewellery finds, detailed typological determinations are likewise lacking, which significantly limits their chronological value (graves 32, 111, 115, and 126). Simple bronze wire earrings and unpublished bead types are not, in themselves, suitable for precise chronological classification. In addition, another group may be distinguished among the inhumation graves, consisting of burials without grave goods or those that are only poorly documented (graves 17, 40, 63, 101, 123, and 136). In several of these cases, no finds were recovered that could securely connect them to the 8th–9th century cremation horizon. The orientation patterns

also fail to present a uniform picture. Although the majority of the inhumation graves are aligned southeast–northwest, other orientations also occur (northeast–southwest and east–west). This does not in itself disprove contemporaneity; however, it weakens the interpretation that a uniform process of ritual transformation was taking place. Particularly important in this regard is grave no. 130, which, based on its weapon assemblage – including a spear and an arrowhead – can be interpreted as a Scythian-type burial¹⁷. Its significance lies in the fact that its orientation corresponds to that of several other inhumation graves, meaning that the southeast–northwest orientation alone cannot be used as proof of belonging to the 8th–9th century cemetery.

The interpretation of the inhumation graves is further complicated by the condition of the documentation. During the excavation, the shallow depth of the graves and the intensive agricultural disturbance resulted in extremely poorly preserved skeletal material in many cases. For several burials, only a few teeth or faint traces of the skeleton survived. Consequently, the outlines of the grave pits often cannot be reconstructed with certainty. Most descriptions lack detailed information on the grave features; precise information concerning the shape, dimensions, fill, or possible structural elements of the pits is unavailable. In some cases, even the orientation itself is only presumed. As a result, not only the chronological classification of several burials, but also the reconstruction of the original structure of the graves themselves remain uncertain. On the basis of all these observations, the contemporaneity of all the inhumation graves and the cremation cemetery cannot be conclusively demonstrated. In some cases, a connection with the 8th–9th century cremation horizon may indeed be suggested, particularly in the case of the child burials containing vessels as grave goods; however, for several burials, the firm chronological and typological arguments necessary to establish this beyond doubt are lacking. The cemetery should therefore be regarded as only partially and conditionally biritual, while part of the inhumation graves may represent a chronologically and culturally heterogeneous group. Accordingly, in evaluating the cemetery, it is justified to place greater emphasis on these uncertainties and to adopt a more cautious interpretation.

The Ghirbom – *Gruicul Fierului* cemetery also contains many unresolved issues. A total of twenty graves were uncovered from the site during two separate excavations: eleven cremation and nine inhumation burials. The first excavation took place in 1975, while the second was conducted in 1995¹⁸, and the teams carrying out the excavations were also different. The earlier discoveries suggested the existence of an inhumation cemetery, since seven inhumation graves were uncovered at that time, whereas in 1995 thirteen graves were unearthed, the majority of which were cremation burials. Of the two inhumation burials uncovered during the second

¹⁵ Horedt 1965, p. 11–12. „Coexistența scheletelor cu urnele pe teritoriul aceluiași cimitir nu condiționează însă ca atare și contemporaneitatea lor, deoarece riturilor folosite pot să oglindescă două faze deosebite ale cimitirului, separat din punct de vedere cronologic”.

¹⁶ Protase 2005, p. 51.

¹⁷ Protase 2005, p. 39.

¹⁸ Anghel 1997, p. 255.

excavation campaign, one was considered by the excavators themselves to be Roman period in date, since Roman pottery fragments were recovered from the disturbed grave. The precise spatial relationship between the two excavation areas remains unknown. During the 1975 excavation, a rich assemblage of finds was recovered, including four unique gold earrings and two silver bracelets. On the basis of this material alone, assigning the cemetery to any specific cultural group would already have been problematic; however, because cremation graves were uncovered during the second phase of excavation, the site was ultimately classified within the Mediaș group¹⁹. Nevertheless, it remains questionable whether the discoveries truly belonged to the same cemetery. Furthermore, the finds from the cremation burials cannot be clearly connected to the cemetery uncovered earlier, and the cremation graves themselves have also been dated approximately one century later. It is also important to mention that several cremation burials were discovered at the Alba Iulia – *Stația de Salvare cemetery*, and for this reason scholarship frequently assigns at least that section of the cemetery to the Mediaș group. At the same time, the validity of this classification also remains highly uncertain²⁰.

The only cemetery in which the contemporaneity of inhumation and cremation burials can be demonstrably confirmed is Bratei II. Of the 244 burials uncovered there, 34 were inhumation graves²¹. In this cemetery, identical types of finds were recovered from both forms of burial. Among these, the beads are particularly significant, as they provide a reliable chronological framework and date the upper horizon of the cemetery to the end of the 8th century and the beginning of the 9th century. Based on the observed superpositions, the cremation section of the cemetery appears to have remained in use for a longer period. It cannot be excluded that an independent population practising cremation burial rites was already living there during the 7th century, while the Avar graves seem to correspond more closely to the final phase of the cremation cemetery. The examples discussed above demonstrate that the principal argument for the connection between inhumation and cremation burials is, in most cases, precisely the lack of information and the scarcity of finds. In the key cemeteries of the Mediaș group, numerous uncertainties arise concerning the question of birituality, and only in the final phase of the Bratei cemetery can a closer relationship and contemporaneity between inhumation and cremation burials be demonstrated – although the nature of this relationship remains unresolved to this day.

The cemeteries of the Mediaș group have been examined by a considerable number of researchers, yet no study is known to us that fundamentally questioned their biritual character. Through the work of Horedt, this interpretation became generally accepted; nevertheless,

a more thorough review reveals several factors that call for caution. The anomalies mentioned above point to an important methodological lesson: the mere presence of cremation and inhumation graves within the same area does not automatically render a cemetery biritual. If archaeological methods cannot provide further clarification due to the absence of finds, and if the relationship between populations practising two different burial rites remains uncertain, then the tools of the natural sciences must also be employed. In the absence of convincing evidence, it is not possible to draw complex conclusions concerning population history; therefore, these questions must remain open. Furthermore, it has become evident that the chronology of these cemeteries is still far from being fully clarified.

3. GÂMBAȘ GROUP

The name of the group derives from the Avar-period cemetery at Gâmbaș (Pl. II). The material recovered from the Reformed Cemetery dates to the Early Avar period. The sites belonging to the group are concentrated primarily in the Middle Mureș Valley, in the vicinity of the salt sources of Transylvania. Due to their geographical location, scholarship has frequently connected the appearance of these cemeteries with salt extraction and trade. Outside the investigated region, no finds indicating Avar presence have been discovered; therefore, Horedt defined these cemeteries as a distinct territorial unit. Initially, he identified them under the name “Mureș group”, while in his later works he increasingly employed the term “Gâmbaș group”, in accordance with the principle that archaeological groups should be named after a particularly significant site. A relative uniformity can be observed in the grave goods of the cemeteries, especially with regard to object types. Mounted warrior burials are particularly prominent, although jewellery, costume elements, and food and drink offerings also occur frequently. The relatively high proportion of weapons has likewise been connected by researchers to salt mining and the need to protect it²².

This group designation is among the least frequently encountered in the scholarly literature, because the finds from these sites fit well within the broader material culture of other Avar-period sites and objects from the Carpathian Basin. Horedt uniformly classified both the Early and Late Avar cemeteries within this group. In his opinion, signs of Slavic–Avar coexistence can also be observed during the later phase, as demonstrated, for example, in the case of the Bratei II cemetery. At Bratei II, a grave was uncovered whose assemblage is characteristic of elite Avar warriors. The warrior was buried together with his horse, and the grave goods date the burial to the Late Avar period²³. Although the cemetery also contains

¹⁹ Anghel 1997, p. 270.

²⁰ Blăjan, Botezatu 2000, p. 451–453.

²¹ Zaharia 1977, p. 15.

²² Horedt 1968, p. 108–109.

²³ Horedt 1986, p. 66–70.

several inhumation burials, this is the only grave that can be clearly associated with elite Avar funerary practices. Within the context of Transylvania, the discovery of an Avar mounted warrior burial within a cremation cemetery is also unique. According to prevailing interpretations, the buried individual belonged to the Avar elite and may have served as the leader of the Slavic–Avar community living there during the 8th century²⁴. At the same time, however, the classification of the cemetery remains uncertain, since it is referred to as part of the Mediaș group because of the cremation burials, while the elite Avar warrior assemblage also leads to its classification within the Gâmbaș group.

4. CIUMBRUD GROUP

The group currently includes only two cemeteries (Pl. III). The first is the eponymous site, excavated in the autumn of 1957 by István Ferenczi and Ádám Dankanits, where approximately 32 graves were uncovered²⁵. The second consists of eight Early Medieval burials discovered in 1993–1994 at the Orăștie – *Dealul Pemilor X8 site*²⁶. The defining characteristics of the group include west–east oriented graves, the presence of coffin burials, and highly varied arm positions. With regard to the grave goods, the simplicity of the male burials is particularly striking, as in most cases they lacked any accompanying finds. The cemetery assemblage is dominated by bronze jewellery and costume elements originating from female burials. At the same time, the custom of depositing ceramic vessels and animal offerings in graves is absent. On the basis of the finds, the cemetery population was associated with a Slavic group whose archaeological heritage remains otherwise unknown both within the Transylvanian Basin and in the broader microregion. The excavators dated the graves to the first half of the 10th century and compared their material with finds from other sites. Geographically, the closest region displaying similar material culture was considered to be South Moravia, and more specifically cemeteries of the Staré Město type²⁷. Ferenczi's hypotheses continue to play a significant role in scholarship, and numerous subsequent studies have either supported or challenged his original conclusions. Following the publication of the cemetery, however, the question remained as to how a Moravian colony could have appeared in the region.

In the same year that the cemetery was published, Maria Comșa already treated the presumed West Slavic origin of the Ciumbrud cemetery as an established fact. She argued – not on archaeological but on historical grounds – that the population of Ciumbrud had fled Moravia after 906 and found refuge there from the Hungarian attacks²⁸. She also connected the dating of the cemetery

to this interpretation. The specific idea of a migration and resettlement thus originated with Comșa, whereas Ferenczi adopted a considerably more cautious position and avoided the pitfalls of combining archaeological and historical arguments too directly. Subsequently, Mircea Rusu also briefly addressed the issue and, in contrast to both Ferenczi and Comșa, dated the cemetery to the second half of the 9th century in his 1971 publication. According to Rusu, the population of Ciumbrud may have been followers of Methodius who, after the death of their master in 885, were forced to leave the Moravian region due to persecutions initiated by Wiching, bishop of Nitra, and subsequently fled to Transylvania, where they maintained close relations with their coreligionists²⁹. Like Comșa, Rusu attempted to explain the presence of a Moravian population in Transylvania through historical arguments, although he connected it to a different historical event. Both hypotheses demonstrated that the chronology of the cemetery remained unresolved. On the one hand, the terminology “Ciumbrud group” emphasised that the phenomenon represented a culturally isolated and unique case³⁰; on the other hand, the designation also appeared somewhat unusual, since at that time only the eponymous site belonged to the group.

Horedt synthesized the earlier scholarship but attempted to avoid taking a definitive position, and similarly to Ferenczi, he approached the question with caution and openness.

The use of the terminology received renewed momentum following the excavation of the Orăștie X8 cemetery during the 1990s and the publication of the site in 2001, which confirmed the validity of employing the term³¹. Despite the differing theories, one element remained constant: none of the studies published thus far questioned the determination of the cemetery's ethnic background. The central issue continued to be which historical context could explain the presence of this group within the microregion and closely connected to this was the lack of consensus regarding the chronology of the cemetery. A new perspective was introduced by István Bóna's synthetic work published in 1989, which broke with the earlier interpretations and identified the cemetery population as Bulgarian. He connected it with the Blandiana type cemeteries, thereby creating the concept of the “Ciumbrud–Blandiana horizon”. By this, he understood a Proto-Bulgarian or Bulgar-Turkic population in which elements of Slavic admixture could occasionally also be observed³². From a methodological perspective, however, Bóna's new approach did not differ substantially from earlier interpretations for two reasons. First, he supported his argument with indirect evidence – particularly the report from 892 stating that the Bulgarian khan Vladimir prohibited the Moravians from purchasing salt. Second, he likewise emphasised parallels within the

²⁴ Cosma 2013, p. 21.

²⁵ Dankanits, Ferenczi 1959, p. 605.

²⁶ Pinter, Boroffka 2001, p. 319–320.

²⁷ Dankanits, Ferenczi 1959, p. 612.

²⁸ Comșa 1959, p. 73.

²⁹ Rusu 1971, p. 724–725.

³⁰ Horedt 1986, p. 79–80.

³¹ Pinter, Boroffka 2001, p. 325–326.

³² Bóna 1989, p. 97–98.

archaeological material. Following this, the interpretation of the group diverged significantly in Romanian and Hungarian scholarship. Hungarian researchers continue to follow Bóna's theory and identify the cemetery as Bulgarian, whereas the majority of Romanian scholars interpret it as a Moravian immigrant community. The principal reason for this continuing divergence of opinion is that significant differences can be observed between the burial customs of the Ciurbrud and Blandiana graves.

The primary distinction between the two groups lies in the presence or absence of ceramic grave goods and animal offerings. Within the Blandiana group these elements occur frequently, whereas in the Ciurbrud group their absence constitutes one of the defining characteristics. However, supporters of the Moravian theory tend to overlook the fact that cemeteries known from Moravian territory also frequently contain ceramic grave goods, and even animal offerings occur in graves there as well, as can be observed, for example, at the Staré Město cemetery³³. At present, we are confronted with unresolved contradictions regarding the interpretation of the Ciurbrud and Orăștie cemeteries. Both the Bulgarian and the Moravian theories rely upon a combination of historical and archaeological arguments and employ methodologically similar approaches. The examination of burial customs and grave goods continues to leave numerous unanswered questions, and the research conducted over recent decades has not succeeded in resolving these contradictions.

5. BLANDIANA GROUP

Beginning in the 1950s, numerous ceramic vessels were recovered from the left bank of the Mureș River, in the vicinity of Blandiana (Pl. IV)³⁴. Based on their morphological characteristics, these vessels can be divided into two clearly distinguishable groups. The first type consists of finely made amphorae of greyish, brownish, or brick-red colour, whose closest parallels are known from the Lower Danube region. The second type includes locally produced grey pottery decorated with bundles of wavy lines. The two types frequently occurred together at the same sites. By 1980, approximately thirty completely intact vessels had been discovered in the region, leading researchers to group these findings under the designation "Blandiana Group"³⁵. The use of this designation was further reinforced by the excavations carried out at Blandiana in 1981–1982, during which eight graves were discovered³⁶. Most of the burials were oriented west–east, traces of animal offerings were observed in several cases, and both ceramic types appeared among the grave goods. Similar phenomena were documented in other cemeteries as well. As early as the late 19th century, burials containing both ceramic

types within the same grave were discovered in the vicinity of Sebeș³⁷. Comparable graves were later identified in the Alba Iulia – *Stația de Salvare cemetery*, which was likewise assigned to this group.³⁸

Based on Horedt's analyses, the distribution of the group was linked to Bulgarian expansion, and cemeteries of this type were therefore associated ethnically with the Bulgarians. Chronologically, he dated the appearance of the Blandiana Group to the period following the abandonment of the Avar cemeteries and continuing until the Hungarian Conquest. Alongside the designation *Blandiana Group*, scholarship has also employed the terms *Dridu culture* and *Danubian-Balkan culture*. The term *Danubian-Balkan* may be regarded as relatively objective from a geographical perspective, since the closest parallels for the ceramics are found within that region. By contrast, a substantial body of scholarship exists concerning the development and changing interpretation of the *Dridu culture* concept. Since excavations began at the site in 1956, its interpretation has undergone several revisions and has become the subject of significant scholarly debate. The two principal excavators, Ion Nestor and Eugenia Zaharia, interpreted the site in markedly different ways. Their methodological differences, however, were not particularly substantial, as both approached the finds from an ethnic perspective. Nestor's views were influenced primarily by the Pan-Slavic theories that emerged after the Second World War, whereas Zaharia represented the increasingly nationalist perspective that became prominent during the Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej era. The present study will not discuss the scholarly debate surrounding the Dridu culture in detail, since the issue has already been extensively documented and summarised elsewhere³⁹. Instead, we seek to highlight why it is problematic to treat the concepts of the Dridu culture and the Blandiana group as equivalent or interchangeable.

First, the Dridu culture is fundamentally based on the excavation of a settlement, whereas the Blandiana group represents an archaeological phenomenon defined primarily through cemeteries. Second, the two phenomena are separated by a considerable geographical distance of approximately 400 kilometres. The connection between them rests mainly on similarities in the ceramic assemblages; however, the distribution of a ceramic form or pottery type cannot in itself be regarded as evidence of ethnic identity. Such similarities are more plausibly explained by trade relations, exchange networks, or cultural interaction than by the presence of the same population. Until these questions are clarified, it appears justified to maintain a distinction between the two terms. Furthermore, the political and historiographical burden associated with the concept of the Dridu culture cannot be ignored.

The interpretation of the group as Bulgarian also raises a number of problems. The Bulgarian hypothesis is based on a written source, the *Annales Fuldenses*, together

³³ Hrubý 1955, p. 96–100.

³⁴ Horedt 1954, p. 495–497.

³⁵ Horedt 1986, p. 72–78.

³⁶ Anghel, Ciugudean 1987, p. 179.

³⁷ Simina 2002, p. 49–51.

³⁸ Dragotă *et alii* 2022, p. 119–121.

³⁹ Madgearu 2007, p. 51–57.

with three archaeological arguments: the characteristics of the ceramic assemblage, the presence of cremation burials, and the occurrence of animal offerings. At the same time, the attribution of a Bulgarian ethnic identity is complicated by the fact that the cemeteries of the Blandiana Group themselves do not present a uniform picture. Among them, the Alba Iulia – *Stația de Salvare cemetery* stands out as particularly distinctive. The remaining sites are known in such a fragmentary manner that only limited conclusions can be drawn from them. In the *Stația de Salvare cemetery*, burial customs can be observed that cannot be regarded as typical of the group as a whole. These include the considerable heterogeneity of grave orientations, the presence of graves lined with brick and stone, and the diversity of burial practices. The internal cohesion of the Blandiana group is based primarily on the occurrence of similar pottery types and animal offerings. Nevertheless, with regard to burial customs, these cemeteries display considerable diversity. It therefore remains questionable whether the significant heterogeneity among the sites justifies treating all of them as a single, unified archaeological group. Moreover, the interpretation of these cemeteries has long been dominated by artefact-centred and ethnic approaches, making a critical reassessment of previous interpretations both necessary and timely.

6. CLUJ GROUP

The designation Cluj group derives from the cemetery excavated on Zápolya Street in Cluj-Napoca in 1911 and again in 1942⁴⁰, where a total of eleven graves were uncovered (Pl. V)⁴¹. This cemetery type belongs to the archaeological heritage of the Hungarian Conquest period and can be clearly distinguished from other cemetery types in the region. Horedt applied the term broadly to the whole of Transylvania and assigned numerous cemeteries from different regions to this category. The category included not only the classic Zápolya Street-type mounted warrior burials, but also cemeteries containing simpler grave goods that can be dated somewhat later, to the end of the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century. For these cemeteries, Horedt also employed the designation *Bijelo Brdo culture*, a term that became widely accepted in international scholarship. In Hungarian archaeological research, however, neither terminology achieved particularly widespread use. In light of later, more detailed microregional evaluations of the Conquest-period cemeteries and finds from the region, the concept of the Cluj group appears increasingly imprecise, particularly with regard to the study area examined here. More detailed analyses indicate that the settlement of northern and southern Transylvania occurred at different times and probably also from different directions⁴².

Chronological differences, together with variations in the archaeological material, suggest that the term Cluj group is overly general. The connections between the cemeteries of northwestern Transylvania and the Upper Tisza region indicate that Hungarian conqueror communities had already settled in the area by the beginning of the 10th century. In contrast, the colonisation of central and southern Transylvania remains considerably more uncertain, although current research suggests that it most likely began only from the middle of the 10th century⁴³. The cemeteries in the vicinity of Alba Iulia are particularly distinctive in this regard. Partial horse burials placed in stone-lined graves and oriented east–west suggest the presence of groups with different cultural backgrounds. The burial customs, grave constructions, and associated grave goods all point to the contemporaneous presence of communities with diverse ethnic and cultural affiliations. All of this further strengthens the argument that the concept of the Cluj group is not suitable as a unified framework for describing the cemeteries of the Transylvanian Basin during the 10th and 11th centuries. The term *Bijelo Brdo culture* is internationally recognized and widely used; however, it never became firmly established within Hungarian archaeological scholarship. Its application is most common in regions located outside the territory of present-day Hungary. Fortunately, the most recent critiques of the terminology and its usage have also emerged from these regions⁴⁴.

The origin of the term is linked to the site of Bijelo Brdo, near Osijek in Croatia, where graves containing characteristic assemblages were excavated at the end of the 19th century. The finds recovered there were interpreted as the heritage of the indigenous Slavic population, who sought to distinguish themselves from the conquering Hungarians through the development of a distinct material identity. The sensitivity of the subject was further heightened by the fact that Slavic historiography often regarded criticism of this interpretation as an attempt to undermine Pan-Slavic unity. From the outset, the designation was associated with finds originating from cemeteries, particularly wire jewellery and S-terminalled lockrings, which occur in large numbers throughout the Carpathian Basin. The concept was popularised by the Czech archaeologist and specialist in Slavic studies Lubor Niederle, who defined a typological and chronological group based on finds from cemeteries of the Middle Danube region. He correlated these assemblages with Hampel's second group and interpreted them as representing a purely Slavic element⁴⁵. As a consequence, the term became virtually synonymous with the material heritage of the Slavs within the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary. Horedt, however, interpreted the concept of the *Bijelo Brdo culture* not only as an ethnic category but also as a chronological one, assigning to it cemeteries characterised by comparatively poorer grave inventories.

⁴⁰ Horedt 1986, p. 80–87.

⁴¹ Gáll 2013, p. 280.

⁴² Gáll 2013, p. 812–817.

⁴³ Gáll 2014, p. 86–87.

⁴⁴ Radišić 2024, p. 261–263.

⁴⁵ Radišić 2024, p. 270–271.

7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURE AND ETHNICITY: THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Before addressing, at the microregional level, the factors and influences that contributed to the development of Horedt's classification system, it is necessary to place the issue within the broader context of international scholarship. Our aim is to examine how the archaeological methods used to distinguish the Horedt groups fit into wider methodological frameworks and how these approaches are evaluated by current theoretical perspectives. The relationship between archaeological material and ethnic identity remains one of the most debated issues. The significance of this problem lies in the fact that archaeology, particularly in the study of the Early Middle Ages, has often sought to reconstruct communities, and even ethnic groups, on the basis of material culture (for example, the identification of the Ciurbrud group as Moravian or Bulgarian, the Mediaș group as Slavic, or the Blandiana group as Bulgarian).

The problem of identifying objects and archaeological cultures with specific ethnic groups already occupied a central place in archaeological thought at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, primarily through the work of Gustaf Kossinna. According to his fundamental premise, archaeological cultures constituted clearly defined systems that could be directly correlated with particular peoples or ethnic communities. This approach was based on the principle of "culture = people = territory"⁴⁶ and enabled researchers to draw conclusions about the distribution, movements, and migrations of populations on the basis of material culture⁴⁷. In many respects, this methodology can be compared to the Early Medieval classification systems currently employed for Transylvania. Even today, the notion persists that clearly distinguishable and well-defined archaeological cultures existed within the Transylvanian Basin and can be delimited chronologically, geographically, and materially. This perspective is also reflected in interpretations concerning the settlement of the supposed Bulgarian and Moravian groups. Although this model shaped archaeological thinking for a long time, it has become increasingly clear that it carries significant methodological problems. A growing consensus in international scholarship holds that archaeological phenomena cannot be interpreted directly as ethnic categories but should instead be viewed as reflections of complex social, political, and cultural processes⁴⁸.

One of the fundamental insights of recent research is that an archaeological culture cannot be regarded as a closed social unit. The concept of "culture" is, in reality, a scholarly construct designed to organise archaeological material and is therefore unsuitable for directly representing ethnic communities. Accordingly, archaeological culture is now understood primarily as an analytical category, one

that becomes problematic when treated as a historical or ethnic reality⁴⁹. It follows that any direct correspondence between archaeological cultures and ethnicity is methodologically unfounded. Moreover, such interpretations have often served political and ideological purposes – as in the cases of the Dridu and Bijelo Brdo cultures – in which archaeological data were employed to reinforce national identities and support political legitimisation⁵⁰. This approach was closely connected to nationalist ideologies and contributed to the incorporation of archaeology into political discourse⁵¹.

The questioning of ethnicity as a concept has also necessitated its reinterpretation. Today, ethnicity is no longer understood as an objective category but rather as a social construct that emerges within specific historical and political contexts⁵². Consequently, ethnicity cannot be directly inferred from archaeological material, since objects do not inherently possess ethnic meaning⁵³. A fundamental problem lies in the archaeological practice of directly equating material culture with social or ethnic identity. The spread of cultural elements does not necessarily imply population movement; similarities may equally result from trade, technological transfer, imitation, or networks of interaction. Therefore, cultural similarities cannot automatically be interpreted as evidence of ethnic identity⁵⁴.

The traditional interpretation of migration is similarly problematic, as it tends to describe historical processes as the movement of homogeneous ethnic communities. Research on the Early Medieval period in Transylvania has likewise frequently assumed the migration of entire groups, such as Avars, Slavs, Moravians, or Bulgarians. More recent scholarship, however, increasingly rejects this perspective and instead emphasises the mobility of individuals or smaller, often multiethnic groups. The assumption that entire populations migrate is largely the product of historical and ideological constructions⁵⁵, just as the settlement of Moravians and Bulgarians in the Mureș Valley was initially proposed on the basis of uncertain historical sources. Consequently, even if the appearance of new groups in the Mureș Valley could be demonstrated, this would not automatically justify assigning them to a single ethnic category. Archaeological evidence alone is insufficient to prove migration unequivocally, since the spread of material culture does not necessarily result from population movement but may instead reflect a variety of processes, including trade, interaction networks, technological transmission, and imitation. The diffusion of cultural phenomena is therefore not synonymous with the movement of populations, and a connection between the

⁴⁶ Kossina 1926, p. 21. Childe later adopted Kossina's views with minor modifications: Childe 1956, p. 28.

⁴⁷ Siklósi 2006, p. 73–74; Burmeister 2023, p. 51–52.

⁴⁸ Halsall 2011, p. 18–19; Curta 2002, p. 6–7.

⁴⁹ Burmeister 2019, p. 231–232; Curta 2002, p. 5–6; Siklósi 2006, p. 80; Burmeister 2023, p. 49.

⁵⁰ Burmeister 2023, p. 50.

⁵¹ Burmeister 2023, p. 57.

⁵² Curta 2002, p. 5–6.

⁵³ Halsall 2011, p. 18–19.

⁵⁴ Burmeister 2000, p. 540–541; Burmeister 2019, p. 233–234.

⁵⁵ Burmeister 2019, p. 231; Burmeister 2000, p. 541; Halsall 2011, p. 19.

two can only be demonstrated in specific circumstances. Most earlier approaches have failed to convincingly distinguish whether the spread of a particular object type or cultural phenomenon reflects actual migration or merely the transmission of ideas, technologies, and artefacts⁵⁶.

In connection with these developments, the concept of culture itself has also been reinterpreted. Modern approaches no longer view culture as a closed and homogeneous entity but rather as a dynamic phenomenon that is continuously changing. In this sense, material culture is not a direct reflection of a community; instead, it constitutes one of the instruments of social communication, whose meaning is always context-dependent⁵⁷. The interpretation of burial evidence is particularly important in this regard, as burials represent one of the most significant sources available to Early Medieval archaeology. Halsall has pointed out that burial practices are highly variable and are influenced by numerous factors, including social status, religion, and the political environment⁵⁸. Grave goods and funerary rites are not merely survivals of tradition but active social practices that form part of a process of representation and social competition; consequently, they are only of limited value for ethnic identification⁵⁹. Similar conclusions have been reached by Reher and Fernández-Götz, who emphasise that no single material element can serve as a reliable ethnic marker in itself. Ethnicity manifests itself only through certain cultural elements, whose meanings are always context-dependent, and overlap with other categories of identity⁶⁰. This implies that ethnic identity cannot be reduced to a single artefact type or archaeological phenomenon.

A methodological approach has also emerged that distinguishes between the “external” and “internal” cultural spheres. The external sphere encompasses those practices that rapidly adapt to changing economic and social environments, whereas the internal sphere – the world of everyday life and interactions within the community – is more conservative and may preserve earlier patterns for longer periods. This approach assumes that traces of migration are more likely to be detected in less conspicuous everyday practices, which are less exposed to external influences and may therefore better reflect cultural continuity⁶¹. Such a perspective represents a significant departure from traditional archaeological approaches. Halsall also offered a specific critique of the view that costume elements – particularly women's jewellery and dress ornaments – can be regarded as reliable indicators of ethnicity. He demonstrated that such elements are highly variable and depend upon numerous factors, including social status, age, and fashion, and therefore cannot be

associated with any single stable ethnic group⁶². Similar conclusions have been reached regarding other categories of artefacts as well⁶³. These observations also call into question the ethnic interpretations that have been based primarily on the jewellery assemblages of the Ciombrud and Blandiana groups. At the same time, contemporary research increasingly emphasises the multidimensional nature of identity. The identities of individuals and communities are not organised around a single factor but rather consist of multiple, simultaneously existing dimensions, such as gender, age, social status, and religious affiliation. Within this framework, ethnicity represents only one of several possible forms of identity⁶⁴.

Overall, it may be concluded that international archaeological scholarship has moved away from static, ethnicity-centred models toward dynamic, contextual, and interdisciplinary approaches. Archaeological material can no longer be regarded as a direct indicator of ethnicity but should instead be interpreted as part of complex social processes. These theoretical considerations are particularly relevant to the interpretation of Early Medieval cemeteries in Transylvania, where archaeological classifications have traditionally been imbued with ethnic significance. In light of these developments, a critical reassessment of these categories is warranted, as is an examination of the extent to which local phenomena can be integrated into the theoretical frameworks of contemporary international scholarship. It is important to emphasise, however, that the concept of archaeological culture – although seemingly a neutral scientific tool – is itself a theoretical construct that carries the legacy of Kossinna's nationalist thinking. This phenomenon is often described through the metaphor of the “Trojan horse”: through the concept of culture, ideological elements became embedded within archaeological thought and continue to influence interpretations over the long term. Consequently, ethnic interpretations not only raise methodological problems but also reflect the persistence of a deeper intellectual tradition shaped by historical circumstances⁶⁵.

8. THE LIMITATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION IN THE STUDY OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES IN TRANSYLVANIA

Horedt's classification system left a profound mark on the archaeology of the Early Middle Ages in Transylvania and, following its publication in 1986, may be regarded as a remarkably enduring framework (Fig. 1). At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the use of the various group designations differs considerably. The terms **Cluj group** and **Gâmbaş group**, for example, are much less widespread, since the designations **Avar** and **Hungarian**

⁵⁶ Burmeister 2019, p. 233–234; Burmeister 2000, p. 539–540.

⁵⁷ Burmeister 2019, p. 231–232.

⁵⁸ Halsall 2011, p. 20–21.

⁵⁹ Halsall 2011, p. 24–25.

⁶⁰ Reher, Fernández-Götz 2015, p. 404–405.

⁶¹ Burmeister 2000, p. 542–544.

⁶² Halsall 2011, p. 21–23.

⁶³ Gulyás 2021, p. 140.

⁶⁴ Halsall 2011, p. 22–23.

⁶⁵ Burmeister 2023, p. 58–59.

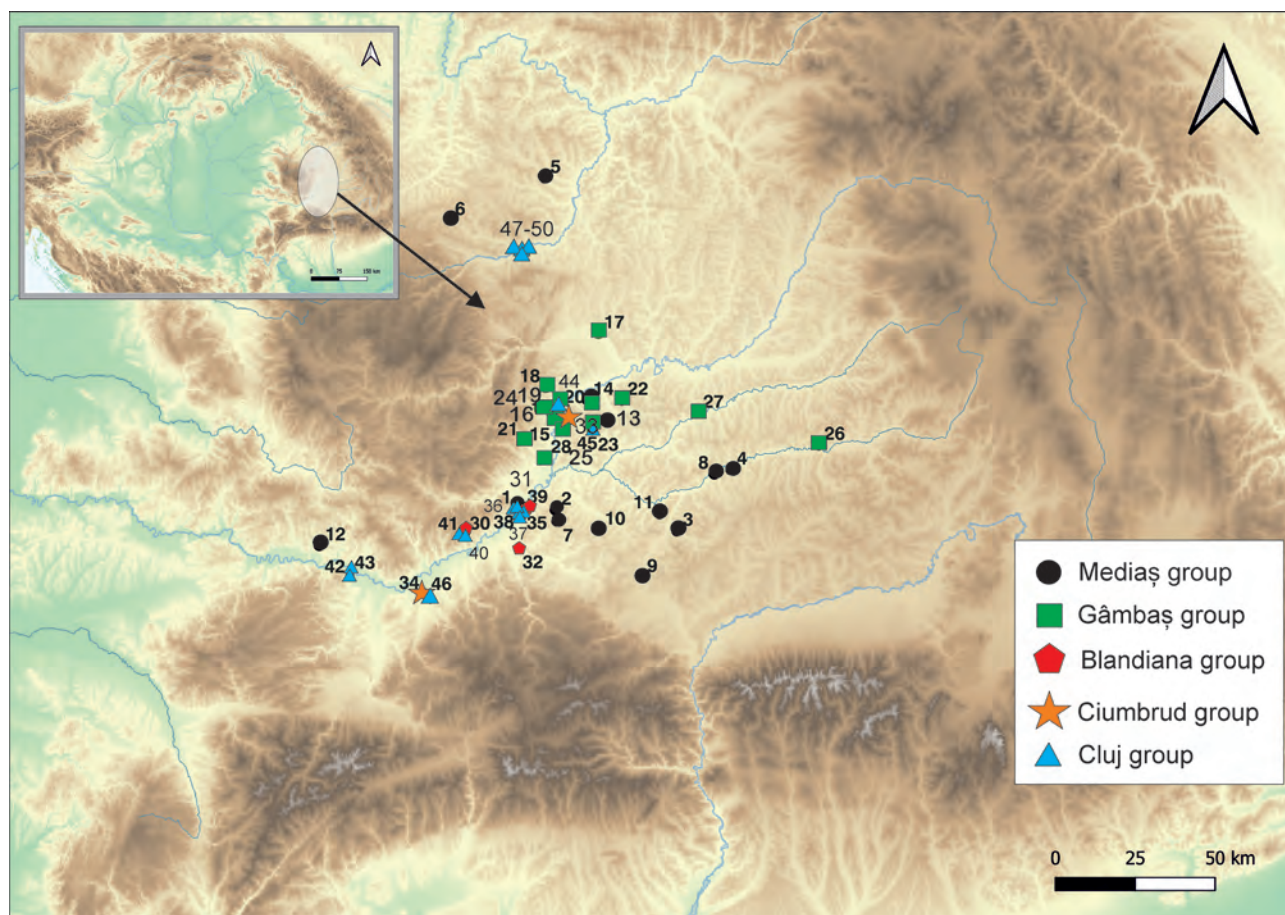


Figure 1. The location of cemeteries and groups within the microregion: **Mediaș group:** 1. Alba Iulia – Stația de Salvare, 2. Berghin, 3. Boarta, 4. Bratei II, 5. Dăbâca, 6. Dorolțu, 7. Ghibor – Gruul Fierului, 8. Mediaș, 9. Ocna Sibiului, 10. Păuca, 11. Șeica Mică, 12. Târnava, 13. Turdaș, 14. Uioare de Jos; **Gâmbaș group:** 15. Aiud, 16. Aiudul de Sud, 17. Câmpia Turzii, 18. Cicău, 19. Gâmbaș – Ogoarele de Jos, 20. Gâmbaș – Reformat cemetery, 21. Geoagiu de Sus, 22. Heria, 23. Lopadea Nouă, 24. Măgina, 25. Sâncrai, 26. Târnava Mare, 27. Târnăveni, 28. Teiuș; **Blandiana group:** 29. Alba Iulia – Stația de Salvare, 30. Blandiana, 31. Miciești, 32. Sebeș; **Ciumbrud group:** 33. Ciumbrud, 34. Orăștie – Dealul Pemiilor X8; **Cluj group:** 35. Alba Iulia – Brândușei street, 36. Alba Iulia – Izvorul Împăratului, 37. Alba Iulia – Pocișa, 38. Alba Iulia – Stația de Orange, 39. Alba Iulia – Stația de Salvare, 40. Blandiana – B. cemetery, 41. Blandiana – C. cemetery, 42. Deva – Micro, 43. Deva – north of the city, 44. Gâmbaș, 45. Lopadea Nouă, 46. Orăștie – Dealul Pemiilor X2, 47. Cluj-Napoca – Kalevala street, 48. Cluj-Napoca – Kalevala street II, 49. Cluj-Napoca – Plugariilor street, 50. Cluj-Napoca – Zăpolya street.

Conquest-period are both more precise and more readily understood within an international scholarly context. Having reviewed the classification system, it is worth considering several factors that argue against this form of categorisation.

1. The boundaries between the groups are not clearly defined. Many cemeteries cannot be assigned exclusively to a single group and often display characteristics associated with multiple categories. A good example is Alba Iulia – *Stația de Salvare*, where *Conquest-period* graves occur alongside Mediaș-type urn burials and finds characteristic of the Blandiana group. The internal chronological division of the site likewise fails to provide support for a sharp separation between these categories. The burials assigned to Phase I of the cemetery are characterised primarily by the presence of amphorae, whereas Phase II is dominated by artefact types associated with the Hungarian

conqueror population, such as arrowheads and axes. A similar distinction has been proposed regarding animal offerings: Phase I has been linked to partial animal deposits or skull offerings (cattle, sheep/goats, etc.), while Phase II has been associated with partial horse burials and egg offerings. However, several graves exhibit characteristics of both phases, making it impossible to distinguish the two phases with certainty⁶⁶. Nor is this separation supported by the spatial distribution of the graves within the cemetery. A further problem arises from the fact that the division of the cemetery into phases became established in the scholarly literature even before the complete publication of the site⁶⁷. As a result, later interpretations often began with pre-existing categories and approached the analysis of the

⁶⁶ Dragotă *et alii* 2022, p. 130.

⁶⁷ Heitel 1994–1995; Ciugudean *et alii* 2022, p. 82–97.

graves as already separated entities. A similar phenomenon can be observed at the Bratei II cemetery. Since both cremation burials and Avar-period graves occur at the site, it has been assigned simultaneously to the Gâmbaş group and the Mediaş group. Once individual cemeteries are routinely placed into multiple groups, the significance of the classification system itself begins to diminish.

The examples of the Alba Iulia and Bratei cemeteries demonstrate that scholars often attempt to describe archaeological phenomena that are far more nuanced and complex using categories that are overly narrow and rigid. At the same time, there are also cemeteries that do not fit satisfactorily into any of the existing groups. A good example is Ghirbom – *Gruicul Fierului*, where seven inhumation graves were excavated. The finds – including knives, rectangular buckles, fire steels, and handmade pottery – cannot be dated more precisely than to the period between the seventh and ninth centuries. Consequently, the site remained unassigned to any group for a long time. Only the cremation burials discovered during the second excavation campaign, whose connection to the cemetery remains uncertain, opened new possibilities for interpretation. All of this demonstrates that the boundaries between the groups are, in many cases, artificial constructs sustained more by scholarly traditions and established classificatory frameworks than by archaeological reality itself.

2. The emphasis placed on the identification of Horedt's cemetery groups and the characteristics attributed to them gradually pushed classical archaeological analyses into the background. The focus of research shifted significantly: typological studies and detailed chronological investigations became increasingly marginalised, as the issues they address were often interpreted exclusively within the framework of the established groups. As a result, the evaluation of cemeteries has, in many cases, ceased to be an independent and open-ended archaeological interpretation and has instead become a description fitted into the categories created by Horedt. This tendency is particularly evident in the case of the so-called biritual cemeteries. Despite the decades that have passed since the introduction of the classification system, the chronological assessment of these cemeteries has changed very little. In many instances, researchers continue to rely on historical sources or secondary data rather than developing independent relative chronological frameworks based directly on the archaeological material. The same pattern can be observed in typological analyses, where Horedt's system continues to dominate. Consequently, rather than serving merely as a tool for interpretation, it often functions as a constraint upon it. One of the principal reasons for the difficulties in dating these cemeteries is that a significant proportion of the artefacts recovered from the graves are inherently problematic to date. Simple knives, buckles, and other basic utilitarian objects provide only limited information. The problem is further compounded by the exceptionally high proportion of graves lacking any grave goods. Even for categories of finds that possess

greater chronological dating potential – such as ceramics, beads, and various forms of jewellery – the development of more refined typological frameworks remains essential. Only through such detailed analyses can more reliable chronological systems be established and the dependence on pre-existing classificatory schemes be reduced.

3. Although the cemetery groups are formally treated in the scholarly literature as cultural categories, the interpretations associated with them are, in reality, often imbued with ethnic and chronological meanings. This tendency is particularly evident in the case of the Ciombrud group, whose interpretation has been framed in ethnic terms since the very beginning of research. In relation to the two excavated cemeteries, the primary question has consistently been how to determine the ethnic affiliation of the individuals buried there, despite the fact that the burial customs and material culture have yet to be comprehensively investigated and even the chronology of the sites has yet to be fully established. This approach highlights one of the most fundamental structural problems of Early Medieval archaeology in Transylvania: cultural phenomena are too often interpreted exclusively within an ethnic framework. Moreover, these ethnic classifications are frequently tied to rigid categories that inadequately reflect the complexity of past social, political, and cultural processes.

It is important to consider that Transylvania, as a peripheral region, did not display the same degree of political and administrative centralisation as, for example, the central regions of the Carpathian Basin⁶⁸. From the collapse of Avar power and until the period of the Hungarian Conquest – possibly even taking Bulgarian influence into account – it is difficult to speak of a unified or dominant political structure. Consequently, the straightforward correlation of cultural elements with specific ethnic groups becomes equally problematic. This does not imply that ethnic interpretations are entirely without relevance. On the contrary, owing to the particular historical circumstances of the region, such approaches have played an important role in scholarship and will likely retain a degree of significance in future research. Nevertheless, it is equally clear that ethnic interpretations have often become disproportionately dominant and, in many cases, have shaped the understanding of individual cemeteries more strongly than the archaeological evidence itself. This imbalance can only be overcome if future research moves away from treating ethnic classification as its primary objective. Rather than focusing principally on determining ethnic affiliation, greater emphasis should be placed on cultural practices, burial rites, the chronology of material culture, and interdisciplinary approaches capable of providing a more nuanced understanding of the archaeological record.

Before outlining the new approach that we consider necessary, it is worth examining the historical and methodological frameworks within which the archaeological

⁶⁸ Gáll 2014, p. 93–94.

classifications still in use today were developed. The identification of archaeological assemblages with specific cultures has long been treated critically by modern theoretical approaches, particularly within processual and post-processual archaeology⁶⁹. These debates originated primarily in prehistoric archaeology, whereas periods for which written sources are available – and where the ethnonyms recorded in those sources are often employed in interpretation – have largely remained outside this discourse. As a result, the concept of cultural groups has often survived in these contexts as a practical tool for classifying archaeological material, frequently without critical reassessment. The development of archaeology in Central and Eastern Europe was particularly shaped by the political environment of the 19th century. As a consequence of the cultural revolution promoted by communist regimes, Marxist ideology largely dominated scholarly approaches, while new theoretical trends emerging in Western Europe penetrated the region only slowly and to a limited extent. Due to the relative isolation of researchers and the influence of political power, archaeology was for a long time unable to critically reflect upon the political and ideological foundations of its own classificatory systems⁷⁰.

Following the Second World War, Marxist ideology also became dominant within Romanian academic life. From 1955 onward, however, during the period of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, nationalist perspectives gradually came to the forefront. Although the political content of these two approaches differed, from a methodological standpoint they employed remarkably similar strategies: archaeology was used as an ideological instrument through which the Early Medieval period was incorporated into a unified ethnic framework. Consequently, the central task of research initially became the identification of Slavic groups and, later, the demonstration of an autochthonous population⁷¹. It was within this intellectual environment that the work of Kurt Horedt introduced a novel methodological direction. The Saxon-born scholar was strongly influenced by the German archaeological tradition, particularly the culture-historical approach, which emphasised the typological and chronological analysis of archaeological sites and the identification of cultural units (*Kulturgruppen*). Horedt defined his own groups within this framework. His distinctive contribution, however, lay in his consistent effort to place the archaeological material of Transylvania within a broader Central European context. The interaction between political and ideological constraints on the one hand and the methodological traditions of the German archaeological school on the other, shaped the framework within which the archaeological classifications discussed here were created. Consequently, these categories should not be viewed merely as products of typological and chronological systematisation; they also reflect the political and scholarly discourse of their time.

Medieval studies have by now largely moved beyond many of the earlier approaches, and the question of the ethnic identification of individual communities or cemeteries is raised far less frequently than in the past. Nevertheless, certain older conventions persist, such as the practice of naming archaeological cultures after their type-sites⁷². It is important to emphasise that these terms do not accurately reflect the actual ethnic composition of the communities under investigation; rather, they describe broader cultural characteristics shared by populations associated with particular political or power centres.

The archaeological evidence from the study area suggests not the existence of homogeneous ethnic or political structures, but rather a landscape characterised by cultural diversity and fluidity, especially during the period between the end of the Avar era and the Hungarian Conquest Period. Beyond the cemetery groups defined by Horedt, numerous other medieval archaeological cultures were established during the 19th and 20th centuries, including the Bijelo Brdo, Dridu, Köttlach, and Keszthely cultures. Most of these terms, however, originated not primarily from scientific necessity but from political considerations. A particularly illustrative example is the Dridu culture, whose meaning changed repeatedly throughout the 20th century, reflecting shifts in the prevailing political system⁷³. The interpretation of the Bijelo Brdo culture was likewise heavily influenced by Soviet cultural policy and Pan-Slavic ideology. Although these approaches receded after the Stalinist period, the terminology that emerged from them remained in use. Consequently, the Bijelo Brdo culture should be regarded less as an ethnic category than as a political and historical construct⁷⁴. At the same time, Horedt's work cannot be fully placed within this tradition. Although he employed a methodological framework developed in the mid-20th century, he was innovative in departing from the dominant normative ethnic approaches of his time. Rather than using classification as a means of homogenisation, he employed it to map and demonstrate cultural diversity. It is precisely for this reason that his work continues to enjoy considerable scholarly respect today.

Nevertheless, it must also be acknowledged that even Horedt's methodological framework bears the political and theoretical imprint of its era. With this in mind, it is advisable that these categories be applied in the future with greater critical awareness. Because these concepts of cultures and groups were originally created with ethnic intentions, they are difficult to reconcile with the interdisciplinary and nuanced perspectives of modern archaeology. Yet under current research conditions, these terms remain difficult to avoid. These terms should therefore be restricted as much as possible to chronological and regional contexts and employed primarily as tools for microregional analysis, rather than as exclusive indicators of ethnic affiliation.

⁶⁹ Barford 2002, p. 81–83; Siklósi 2006, p. 84–85.

⁷⁰ Langó 2007, p. 36–37.

⁷¹ Madgearu 2007, p. 50–51.

⁷² Radišić 2024, p. 261.

⁷³ Madgearu 2007, p. 56–58.

⁷⁴ Radišić 2024, p. 263.

When Horedt developed his archaeological classifications, he already emphasised that several different population groups coexisted in Transylvania between the seventh and eleventh centuries. Today, there is broad scholarly consensus in rejecting the notion of a homogeneous population within the region. This represented a significant contribution during the second half of the 20th century, as it challenged simplified historical narratives and schematic interpretations by emphasising cultural diversity. From a contemporary perspective, however, it is also necessary to recognise that the primary value of these categories lies not in their ability to reconstruct past reality, but in their usefulness within scholarly discourse.

The societies of the period did not possess the sharply defined boundaries implied by these classifications. On the contrary, communities lived alongside one another, interacted continuously, and left traces of these interactions in their material culture, burial practices, and settlement structures. The categories developed within archaeological discourse, however, often constrained research within rigid frameworks. Differences between groups tended to be emphasised, while similarities and interconnections received far less attention. This approach reflects an outdated model that seeks to determine ethnicity directly from material culture.

Future research should adopt a much stronger microregional focus. Rather than concentrating on the identification of discrete cultural groups, it should seek to understand how communities with different cultural backgrounds coexisted within the same region and what forms of interaction shaped their everyday lives and identities. Achieving this goal requires more precise chronological frameworks for cemeteries, as well as detailed analyses of the cultural interdependencies and internal developments of individual communities. A methodological framework is needed that allows for the integrated interpretation of archaeological sites and finds – including cemeteries, settlements, and artefacts – examining them not in isolation but within their broader archaeological and social contexts. Useful models for such an approach can be found in recent synthetic studies, such as the *Someșul Mic* volume⁷⁵, which evaluated the archaeological material of the region on a large temporal scale through collaborative research. In the future, only interdisciplinary projects and research conducted within collaborative teams will be capable of providing the level of analytical complexity necessary for understanding Early Medieval societies. Instead of organising cemeteries according to presumed ethnic affiliation, they should be examined primarily from chronological and microregional perspectives. This shift in emphasis would make it possible to identify broader patterns, shared developments, and regional networks of interaction that are otherwise obscured by traditional ethnic classifications.

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

For a long time, traditional ethnic-based classifications have played a decisive role in the interpretation of archaeological material from Early Medieval Transylvania. Although these categories initially proved useful for organising archaeological evidence, they have increasingly become overly generalising and imprecise, failing to accurately reflect the diversity and dynamism of the communities that inhabited the region during this period. Future research would therefore benefit from moving beyond ethnic-based categorisation and focusing instead on microregional analyses, as well as on the investigation of chronological and cultural relationships. Such an approach would make it possible to better understand the complex interactions between communities and the processes that shaped regional developments.

In summary, the archaeology of Early Medieval Transylvania requires a paradigm shift that moves beyond traditional ethnic categories and places greater emphasis on interactions between communities, as well as on broader cultural and social dynamics. This perspective would not only provide a more accurate understanding of the diverse populations that once inhabited the region but would also contribute to the further development of archaeological methodology itself.

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⁷⁵ Gáll et alii 2017.

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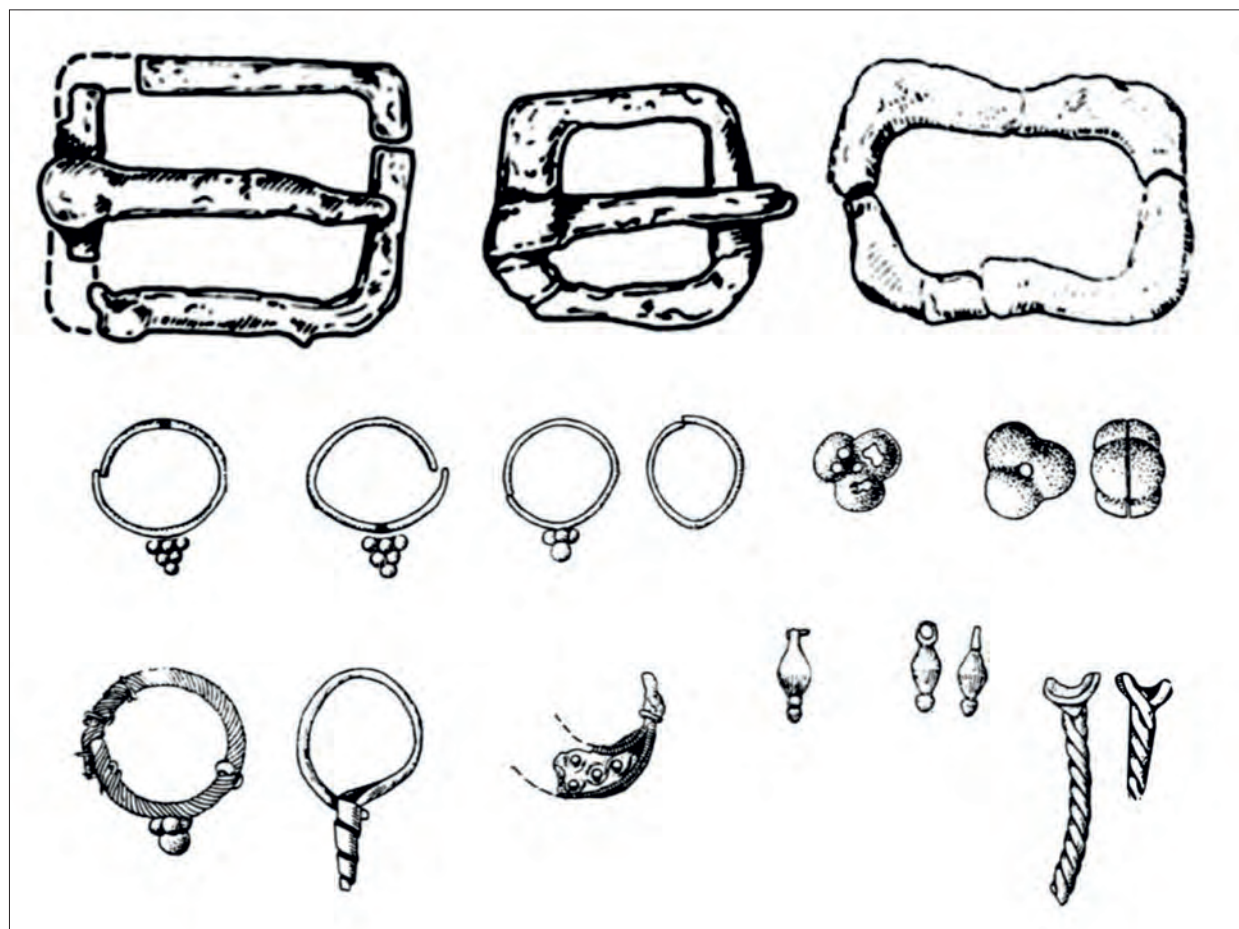


Plate I. Selected artefacts from the Mediaș group cemeteries (after Zaharia 1977, fig. 31–32; Țiplic, Tomagea 2016, p. 44–45).

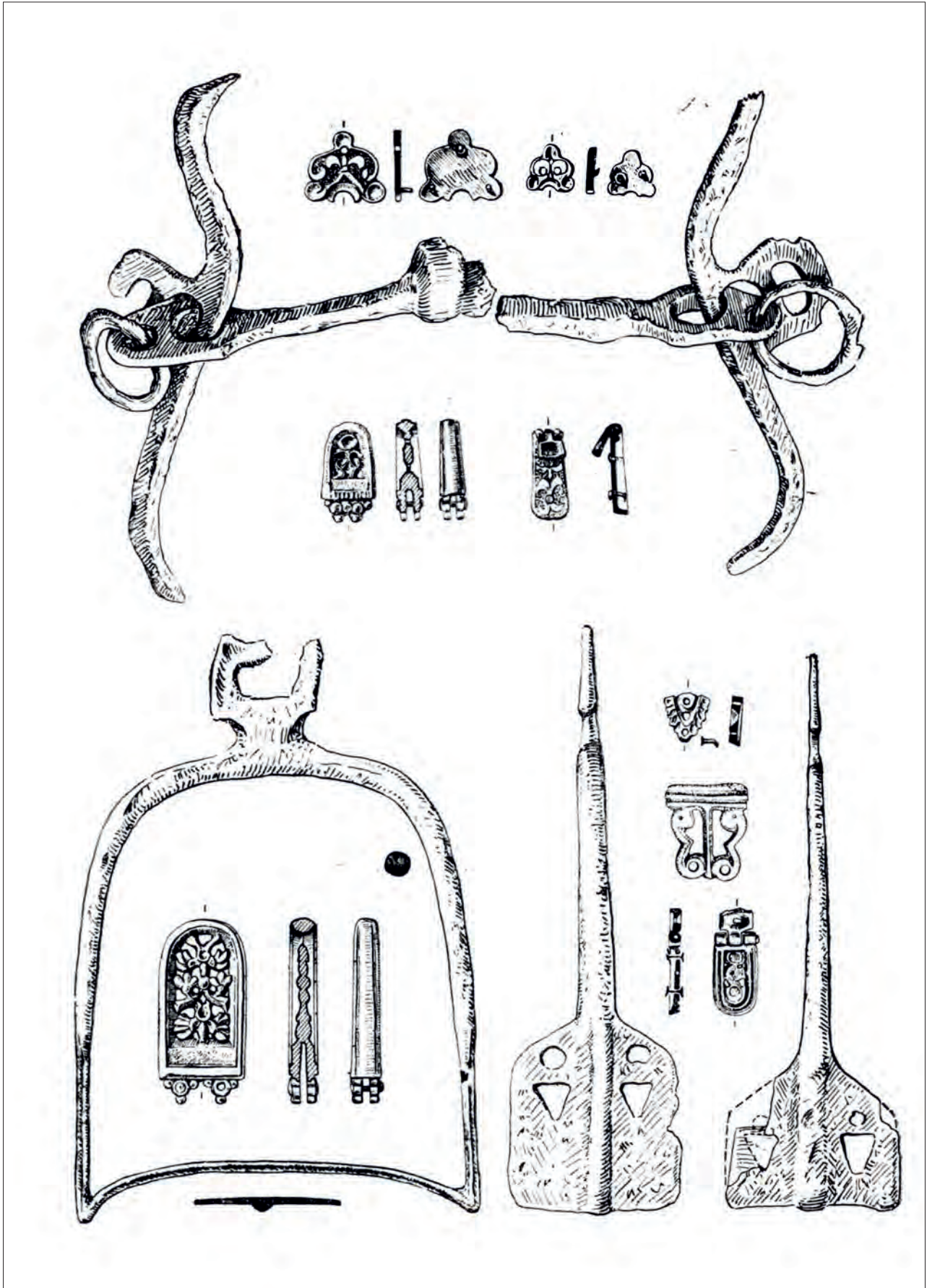


Plate II. Avar-style artefacts found at the Bratei II Cemetery (after Zaharia 1977, fig. 29).

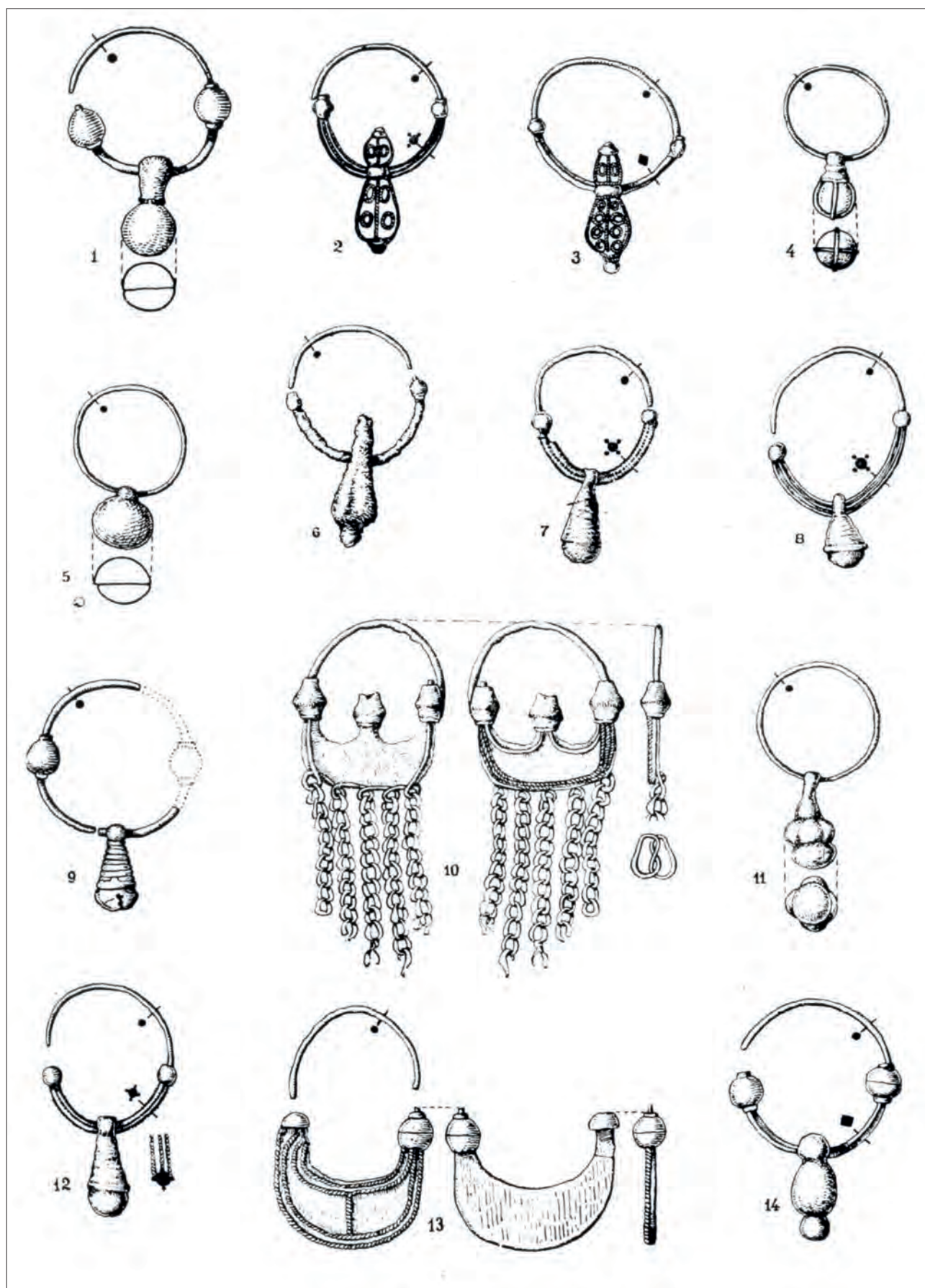


Plate III. Two graves at Alba Iulia – Stația de Salvare classified as part of the Blandiana group (Dragotă et alii 2022, p. 141–142).

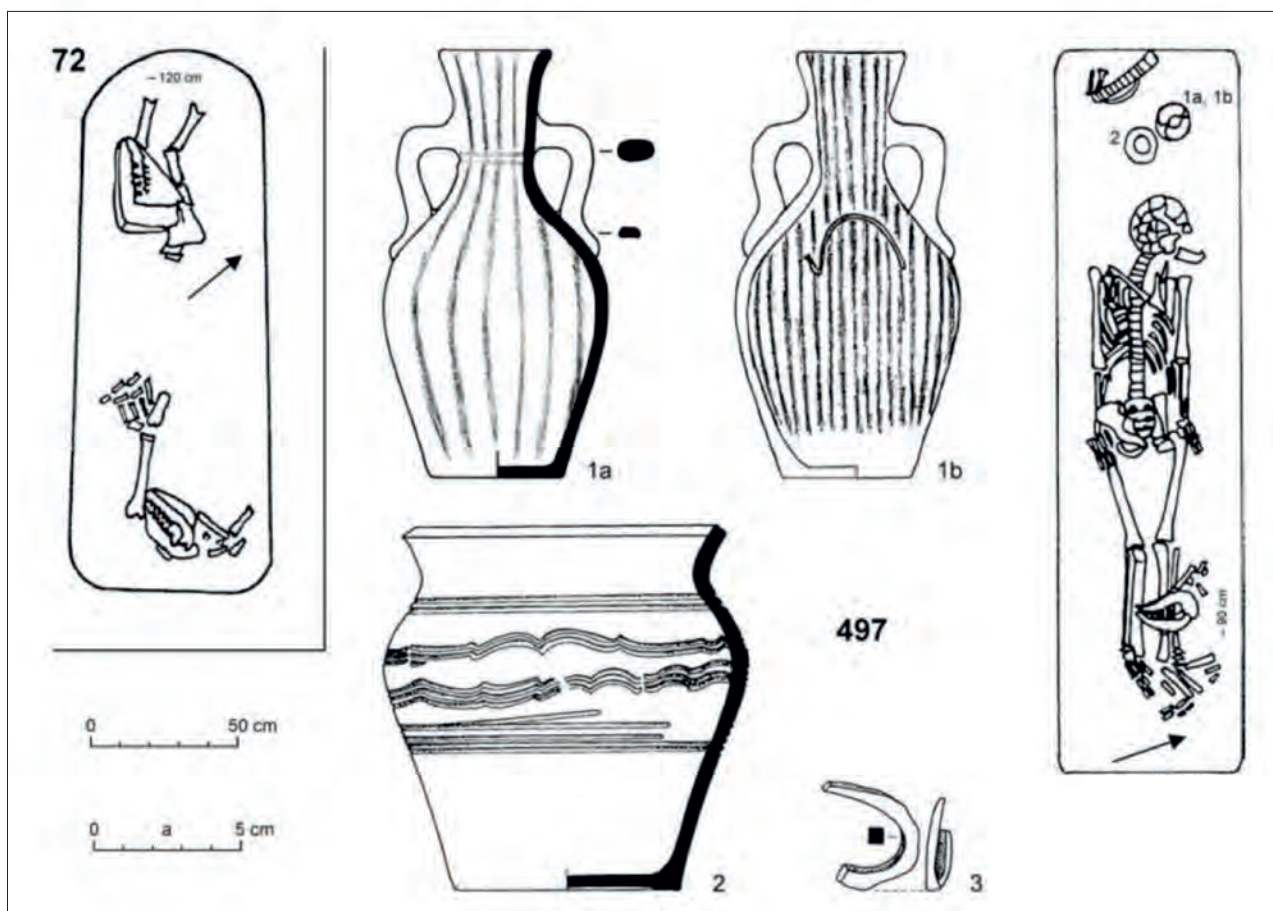
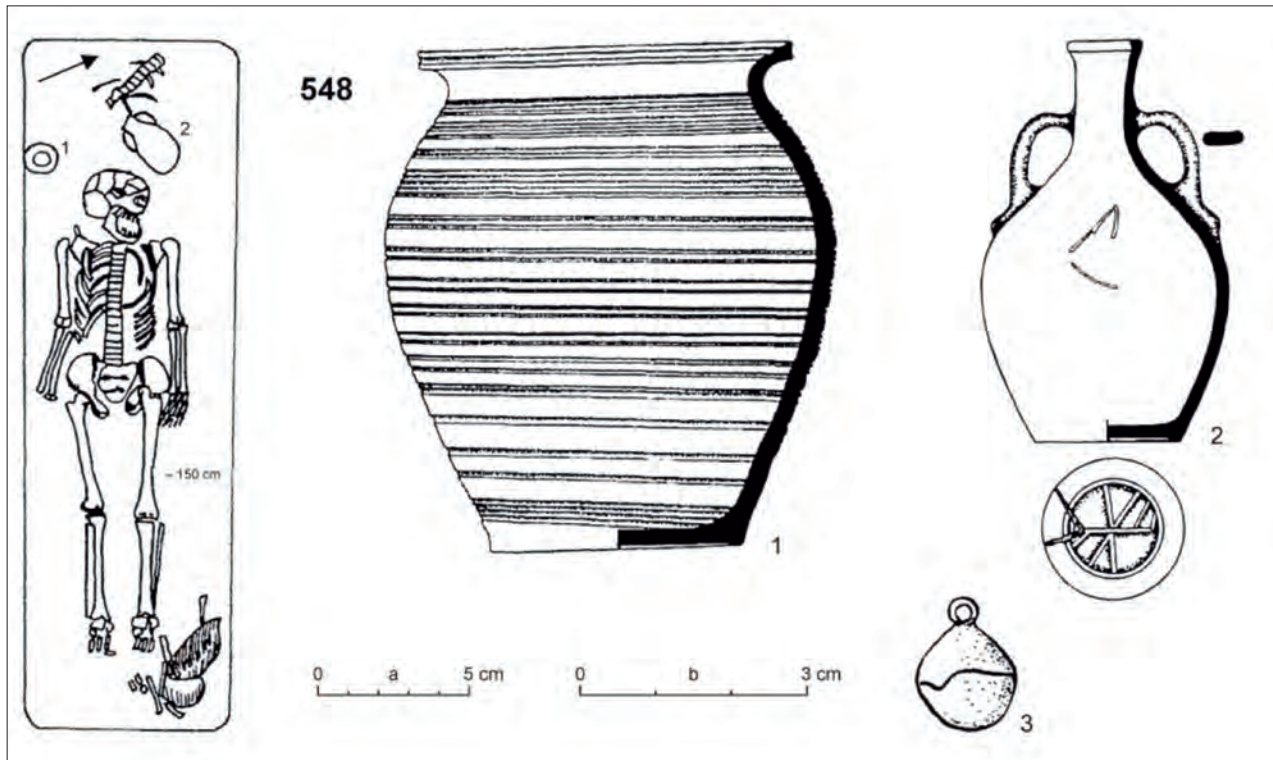


Plate IV. Jewellery and accessories from the Ciombrud cemetery (after Dankanits, Ferenczi 1959, fig. 4).

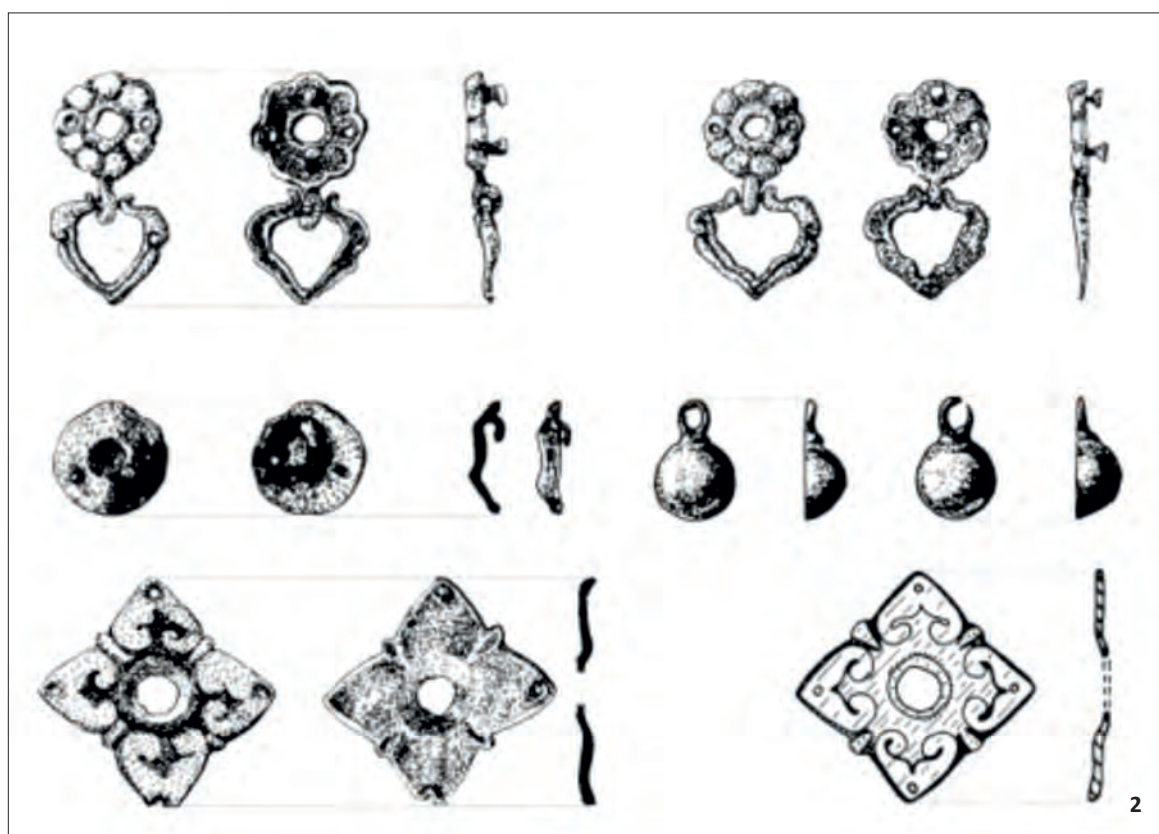


Plate V. A selection of artefacts from the Hungarian Conquest Period at Gâmbaş (2) and Blandiana B. (1) cemetery (after Gáll 2013, p. 160–171).

ABREVIERI / ABRÉVIATIONS / ABBREVIATIONS

- AAC – Acta Archaeologica Carpatica, Kraków
ACMI – Anuarul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice, București
ActaArchHung – Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
Acta Classica Univ. Scient. Debrecen – Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis, Debrecen, Ungaria
ActaMN – Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj
ActaMP – Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău
ActaPraehistA – Acta praehistorica et archaeologica
AIGR - Anuarul Institutului Geologic al României, București
AIIAC – Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „George Barițiu”, Cluj
AJA – American Journal of Archaeology, Boston
AJPA – American Journal of Physical Anthropology
Alba Regia – Alba Regia. Annales Musei Stephani regis, Székesfehérvár
Anatolia Antiqua – Anatolia Antiqua. Revue internationale d'archéologie anatolienne. Institut Français d'Etudes anatoliennes d'Istanbul
Anatolica – Anatolica. The Netherlands Institute for the Near East in Leiden
AnB – Analele Banatului, Muzeul Banatului, Timișoara
AncNearEastSt – Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Leuven, Belgia
Angustia – Angustia. Arheologie, Etnografie, Sfântu Gheorghe
Anmed – Anmed. Anadolu Akdenizi Arkeoloji Haberleri, Antalya, Turcia
AnSt – Anatolian Studies. British Institute of Ankara
AnUCraiova – Analele Universității din Craiova, Craiova (seria Istorie)
AnUVT – Annales d'Université “Valahia” Târgoviște, Section d'Archéologie et d'Histoire
Apulum – Acta Musei Apulensis. Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia
ArchBulg – Archaeologia Bulgarica, Sofia
ArchÉrt – Archaeológiai Értesítő, Budapest
ArchHung – Archaeologia Hungarica, Acta Archaeologica Musei Nationalis Hungarici, Budapest
ArchKorr – Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt, Mainz
ArchMűh – Archeometriai Műhely
ArchRozhledy – Archeologické Rozhledy, Praha
Argesis – Argesis. Muzeul Județean Argeș. Pitești
Arheologia Medievală. Complexul Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița
ArheologijaSSSR – Arheologija SSSR. Svod Archeologičeskikh Istočnikov, Moscova
Arheološki vestnik – The Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
ArhMold – Arheologia Moldovei, Iași
AS – Archeologica Slovaca, Bratislava
AST – Eski Eserler ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, I. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı, Istanbul / General Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Museums
AȘUI – Analele științifice ale Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Iași
BA – Biblioteca de Arheologie, București
BaBesch – Bulletin antieke beschaving. Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology
BAI – Bibliotheca Archaeologica lassiensis, Iași
Baltic-Pontic Studies – Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Institute of Archaeology, Institute of Eastern Studies, Poland
Banatica – Banatica. Muzeul Banatului Montan, Reșița
BarBrSer – British Archaeological Reports. British Series, Oxford
BARIntSer – British Archaeological Reports. International Series, Oxford
BCMI – Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice
Be-Ja – Bulgarian e-Journal of Archaeology
BerRGK – Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Frankfurt am Main
BIAA Monograph – British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara
BiblEphemNap – Bibliotheca Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca
BiblMemAnt – Bibliotheca Memoriae Antiquitatis, Piatra-Neamț
BiblThrac – Bibliotheca Thracologica, București

- BMC – *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, Londra; II, *Vespasian to Domitian*, 1930; IV, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus*, 1968; V, *Pertinax to Elagabalus*, 1950 (H. Mattingly)
- BMI – Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice, București
- BMJT – Buletinul Muzeului Județean Teleorman, Alexandria
- BMTAG – Buletinul Muzeului Județean „Teohari Antonescu”, Giurgiu
- BSA – British School at Athens, Athens
- BSNR – Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române, București
- BSPF – Bulletin de la Société Préhistorique Française, Paris
- BSSC – Buletinul Societății de Științe din Cluj
- București-MIM – București. Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie. Muzeul Municipiului București
- BYZAS – German Archaeological Institute of Istanbul
- CA – Cercetări Arheologice. Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, București
- CAB – Cercetări arheologice în București. Muzeul Municipiului București
- Caiete ARA – Caietele ARA, Revistă de Arhitectură. Restaurare și Arheologie, Asociația ARA, București
- Carpica – Carpica. Complexul Muzeal „Iulian Antonescu” Bacău, Bacău
- CCA – Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, București
- CCDJ – Cultură și Civilizație la Dunărea de Jos, Călărași
- Cerclst – Cercetări Istorice, Muzeul de Istorie a Moldovei, Iași
- CN – Cercetări numismatice, București
- CollAn – Colloquium Anatolicum. Anadolu Sohbetleri, Institutum Turcicum Scientiae Antiquitatis, Istanbul
- Crisia – Crisia. Muzeul Țării Crișurilor, Oradea
- Cuadernos del Museo Geominero – Museo Geominero, Instituto Geológico y Minero de España, Madrid
- Current Anthropology – Current Anthropology. University of California, Merced
- Dacia – Dacia (Nouvelle Série). Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne. Académie Roumaine. Institut d'archéologie « V. Pârvan », Bucarest
- Danubius – Danubius, Revista Muzeului de Istorie Galați
- Documenta Praehistorica – Documenta Praehistorica, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Archaeology, Ljubljana
- DolgCluj – Dolgozatok az Erdélyi Nemzeti Múzeum Érem- és Régiséggyűjtéséről, Kolozsvár
- DTKFD – Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi
- EJA – European Journal of Archaeology
- ERAUL – Études et Recherches archéologiques de l'Université de Liège
- ÉtAlex – Études Alexandrines, Centre d'Études Alexandrines
- ÉtTrav – Etudes et travaux. Studia i prace. Travaux du Centre d'archéologie méditerranéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences
- EurAnt – Eurasia Antiqua. Deutsche Archäologisches Institut, Berlin
- FrC – Fragmenta Comica
- FolArch – Folia Archaeologica. A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Évkönyve. Annales Musei Nationalis Hungarici, Budapest
- FSI – Forensic Science International
- Germania – Germania. Anzeiger der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Frankfurt
- Geoarchaeology – Geoarchaeology. An International Journal
- Hesperia – Hesperia. Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Cambridge
- HOMO – HOMO. Journal of Comparative Human Biology, Stuttgart
- Human Evolution – Human Evolution, International Institute for Humankind Studies and University of Florence
- Ialomița – Ialomița. Studii de cercetări de arheologie, istorie, etnografie și muzeologie, Slobozia
- IJO – International Journal of Osteoarchaeology
- Iran – Iran. Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies
- IstMitt – Istanbul Mitteilungen, Istanbul
- Istros – Istros, Muzeul Brăilei, Brăila
- IzvestijaVarna – Izvestija na Archeologiceskii Institut, Sofia
- JAHA – Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Cluj-Napoca
- JAnat – Journal of Anatomy
- JAS – Journal of Archaeological Science
- JAS: Reports - Journal of Archaeological Sciences: Reports
- JDAI.AA – Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Archäologischer Anzeiger, Berlin
- JFS – Journal of Forensic Sciences

- JHE – Journal of Human Evolution
 JRA – Journal of Roman Archaeology
 JRGZM – Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz, Mainz
 JRS – The Journal of Roman Studies
 KST – T. C. Kültür Bakanlığı, Eski Eserler ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, I. Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı, Ankara / Republic of Turkey, General Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Museums, Ankara, Turkey
 LIMC – Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, Zürich, München, Düsseldorf
 Litua – Litua, Studii și cercetări, Târgu-Jiu
 LRBC – *Late Roman Bronze Coinage A.D. 394-498*, Londra, 1965: I, *The Bronze Coinage of the House of Constantine A.D. 324-346* (P. V. Hill, J. P. C. Kent); II, *Bronze Roman Imperial Coinage of the Later Empire A.D. 346-498* (R. A. G. Carson, J. P. C. Kent).
 Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica – Macedonian Archaeological Society, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia
 MAMA – Monumenta Asiae Minoris antiqua. Publications of the American Society for Archaeological Research in Asia Minor
 Marisia – Marisia. Studii și materiale. Arheologie – Istorie – Etnografie, Târgu Mureș
 Marmatia – Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Arheologie Maramureș, Baia Mare
 MarNero – Il Mar Nero. Annali di archeologia e storia
 MCA – Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice, București
 MDOG – Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft
 MemAnt – Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț
 MFMÉ – A Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve, Szeged
 Mousaios – Mousaios. Buletinul Științific al Muzeului Județean Buzău
 MuzNaț – Muzeul Național, București
 NAC – Numismatica e Antichità Classiche, Lugano-Pregassona
 OIP – Oriental Institute Publications, University of Chicago
 OJA – Oxford Journal of Archaeology, Oxford
 Olba – Mersin University Publications of the Research Center of Cilician Archaeology, Mersin, Turkey
 PALMA – Papers on Archaeology of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities, Leiden, Olanda
 PAS – Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa, München-Berlin
 PBF – Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Münster
 Peuce – Peuce. Studii și cercetări de istorie și arheologie, Institutul de Cercetări Eco-Muzeale, Tulcea
 Phoenix – Phoenix. The Journal of the Classical Association of Canada
 Plural – Journal of the History and Geography Department „Ion Creangă” Pedagogical State University, History, Culture. Society. Seria Archaeologica II, Chișinău
 PMMB – Publicațiile Muzeului Municipiului București
 Pontica – Pontica. Studii și materiale de istorie, arheologie și muzeografie, Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie Constanța
 PZ – Prähistorische Zeitschrift, Berlin-Mainz
 Quaternary International – Quaternary International. The Journal of the International Union for Quaternary Research
 Quaternary Science Reviews – Quaternary Science Reviews. The International Multidisciplinary Research and Review Journal
 RA – Revue Archéologique, Paris
 RAASI – Revista de Arheologie, Antropologie și Studii Interdisciplinare, Institutul de Cercetări Bioarheologice și Etnoculturale, Republica Moldova
 Radiocarbon – An International Journal of Cosmogenic Isotope Research, Cambridge
 RCAN – Revista de Cercetări Arheologice și Numismatice, Muzeul Municipiului București
 RevBistr – Revista Bistriței. Complexul Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița
 RevMuz – Revista Muzeelor, București
 RGZM – Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseums Mainz, Mainz
 RIC – *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, Londra: I², *From 31 BC to AD 69*, 1984 (C. H. V. Sutherland); II, *Vespasian to Hadrian*, 1926 (H. Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham); II.1, *From AD 69-96. Vespasian to Domitian*, 2007 (I. A. Carradice, T.V. Buttrey); II.3, *From AD 117-138. Hadrian*, 2019 (R. A. Abdy, P. F. Mittag); III, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus*, 1930; IV.1, *Pertinax to Geta*, 1968 (H. Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham); IV.2, *Macrinus to Papien*, 1938; IV.3, *Gordian III – Uranian Antoninus*, 1949 (H. Mattingly, E. A. Sydenham, C. H. V. Sutherland); V.1, 1927 (reimprimat 1968; P. H. Webb); VII, *Constantine and Licinius A.D. 313-337*, 1966 (P. M. Bruun); VIII, *The Family of Constantine I A.D. 337-364*, 1981; X, *The Divided Empire and the Fall of the Western Parts A.D. 395-491*, 1994 (J. P. C. Kent)
 SAA – Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, Iași
 Sargetia – Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis. Buletinul Muzeului județean Hunedoara, Deva

SAV – Študijné zvesti Archeologicky ústav SAV, Nitra
Sci Rep – Scientific Reports
SCIV(A) – Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie), București
SCN – Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică, București
Seleucia – Seleucia. Olban Excavations Series
SP – Studii de Preistorie, București
SprawArch – Sprawozdania Archeologiczne, Warsaw
SRMKA – Seramik Araştırmaları Dergisi, The Journal of Ceramic Research
StArchBrno – Studia Archaeologica Brunensia, Masaryk University, Brno
Starinar – Starinar. Arheološki institut Beograd
StComPitești – Studii și Comunicări, Seria Istorie, Muzeul Județean Argeș, Pitești
StudCom Satu Mare – Studii și comunicări Satu Mare
Studia Praehistorica – National Archaeological Institute with Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Syria – Syria. Archéologie, art et histoire. Institut Français du Proche-Orient
Terra Sebus – Terra Sebus. Acta Musei Sabesiensis, Anuarul Muzeului Municipal „Ioan Raica”, Sebeș
Th-D – Thraco-Dacica, București
Thracia – Thracia, Sofia
TIB – *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, Wien
Transylvanian Review – Transylvanian Review. Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Cluj-Napoca
TÜBA-AR – TÜBA-AR Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi arkeoloji dergisi (TÜBA-AR Turkish Academy of Sciences Journal of Archeology)
UPA – Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie, Bonn
VAH – *Varia Archaeologica Hungarica* V. Redigit Csanád Bálint. Publicationes Instituti Archaeologici Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest
Varia Anatolica – *Varia Anatolica*. L'Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, Istanbul
Ziridava – Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica, Arad