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## VERBICIOARA DISCOVERIES IN HUNEDOARA

*Alexandru Szentmiklosi\**, *Sorin Tincu\*\**

Keywords: *Hunedoara region, Middle Bronze Age, imports, Verbicioara culture, Wietenberg culture*

The systematic archaeological research done in the town of Hunedoara has evidenced a continuous dwelling of this area, starting with the Paleolithic age<sup>1</sup>.

Among the sites we note *Dealul Sânpetru, Platoul din fața Turnului Neboisa, Cimitirul Reformat* (or *Biserica Reformată*) and *Grădina Castelului*. Both surveys and systematic archaeological excavations have been made at these points and they resulted in artifacts dating from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages<sup>2</sup>.

The items that are characteristic for the Wietenberg culture are especially interesting, not only for the knowledge on the evolution of human habitation during the Bronze Age but also for the contacts with communities that are further away<sup>3</sup>. The discoveries from *Grădina Castelului, Strada Toamnei* and *Dealul Sânpetru – Stația de Filtrare a apei* (Pl. I/1–2) emphasize these contacts.

### *Description of finds*

1. Included in the theme exhibition from the Corvins' Castle Museum is a bitronconical, restored vessel. It was discovered in *Grădina Castelului* but the information concerning it is rather scarce<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Luca 2005, 134–138, no 212 (see also older literature).

<sup>2</sup> Andrițoiu 1986–1987, 51; Andrițoiu 1992, 14; Luca 1999, 13–14; Luca 2005, 7–8.

<sup>3</sup> Andrițoiu 1979, 24; Boroffka 1994, 47; Luca 2005, 134–135, no. 212, with literature. An Otomani typical vessel is known in Hunedoara, whose chronological frame is at the end of the Middle Bronze Age and at the beginning of Late Bronze Age (Andrițoiu 1992, 60–61, Pl. 47/3).

<sup>4</sup> T. Mariș, former archaeologist at the Corvins' Castle Museum has done some systematical archaeological excavations between

The vessel has a bitronconical, flattened shape, a short cylindrical neck (approximately 2 cm high), straight rim and base. It has a slightly rounded carina; on its mid-section the vessel presents four groups of handles, placed by two, that are vertically perforated. The perforations have a diameter of approximately 0.5 cm and are about 1.5 cm away from each other. It is most likely that they were used to hang the vessel by strings passed through those perforations. The vessel was broken in the old age, it was restored and its original color was grayish-black.

The upper half of the body is slightly globular and it is decorated with incised ornaments. The well pronounced carina is decorated with a row of short, alveolated, oblique notches, which continue along the horizontal, perforated small handles. In the upper part of these notches a circular incision was traced; it marks the base of the upper body. Some parallel, elongated triangles (approximately 2.2 cm long) start from the incised line. Their insides are incised with three lines whose common starting point is the tip of the triangles. Next to the small handles, the upper part of the body, all the way to the neck base, is decorated with six groups of two vertically incised lines, which form five wider fields. The insides of each field is decorated with obliquely incised lines that form a column of rhombs, hachured inside with three, parallel, oblique lines.

Vessel dimensions: height = 17.5 cm, maximum body diameter = 23 cm, base diameter = 6.7 cm, rim diameter = 7.8 cm (Pl. II/1a-b).

1981–1989 (Andrițoiu, 1986–1987, 51; Andrițoiu 1992, 14), these works were continued between 1996–2004 by S. A. Luca (Luca 2005, 7–8). T. Mariș is considered the one who discovered the flattened bitronconical Verbicioara vessel.

2. In the southwestern side of the earthen fortress on the *Sânpetru Hill* (on the terrace at the base of the hill), a water tower was built (Dealul Sânpetru-*Stația de Filtrare*). When a water pipe was lowered on the northeastern slope of Dealul Sânpetru a reach archaeological material was uncovered. The artifacts belong to several historic periods: Bronze Age, First Iron Age, Dacian Age, Roman period<sup>5</sup>.

In the spring of 2009, during the salvage excavation in the area of the water filtering station, several trenches were opened. In trench S4/2009, square A11, -0.4–0.43 m deep two pottery shards were discovered. They belong to a two handled cup. By its shape and ornament this cup is a Wietenberg import<sup>6</sup>.

The cup presents a slightly flattened, globular shape, concave base, a short tronconical neck, ended in a slightly rounded rim. Two over-heightened handles are attached to the rim. The upper part of the handles presents two tronconical buttons. The cup has a slight bulge, suggesting a semispherical prominence. The paste is fine, tempered with sand and mica. The paste color is grayish-black with flecks (similar to the bitronconical vessel).

Decoration: parallel, incised lines on the maximum diameter (three lines), on the shoulder area (two lines) and under the rim (two lines). Obliquely hachured triangles are incised on the upper half of the cup. Their base starts on the band on the maximum diameter, while their tip is united with the horizontal lines on the shoulder. Above the parallel horizontal lines on the shoulder, as well as on the rim, the cup was decorated with oblique alveoli.

Measurements: height = 8 cm, rim diameter = 7.5 cm, maximum diameter = 13 cm (Pl. III/1).

3. Still in 2009 some water pipe network was undertaken without an archaeological authorization on *Toamnei Street*. In the excavated dirt a pottery sherd was discovered. It was part of a vessel (bowl or cup) decorated with Verbicioara motifs.

The shape is slightly globular, with a short neck and straight rim. The shoulder is slightly carinated,

very well delimited from the neck base. The paste is tile-colored with yellowish spots on the exterior, while the inside of the vessel is gray. The paste presents some traces of smoothing while the slip has fallen. The paste is fine, tempered with sand and grained mica. It was very well, oxidizing fired.

The vessel was decorated with more or less superficially incised lines. A row of short and oblique indents were placed under the maximum diameter. The indents are triangular, with a widened upper part. Above them, two incised parallel lines. Above these lines a row of triangles were incised; they are parallel and elongated and their tip is placed on the slightly carinated shoulder. The inside of the triangles is divided into three fields by two median lines, perpendicular on the two parallel lines under the maximum diameter. The rim is decorated with a row of oblique indents; under them, a deeply incised line.

The sherd permits only estimate measurements: maximum diameter = 16.7 cm; rim diameter = 14 cm (Pl. III/2).

#### Discussions

From the shape and decoration point of view the fragmentary vessels discovered in Hunedoara (*Grădina Castelului, str. Toamnei* and Dealul Sânpetru-*Stația de Filtrare a apeii*), have analogies both in the Vatina and the Verbicioara cultures. Both of these evolve at the same time with the Wietenberg communities in the Hunedoara area.

As a shape the bitronconical vessel from Hunedoara-*Grădina Castelului* is integrated in the *Hängegefäße* category, with close analogies in relatively large geographical spaces (Banat, Crișana and to the south of Danube, in northeastern Serbia). The furthest analogy, to our knowledge, is the bitronconical vessel discovered at *Szihalom-Árpádvár* (or *Földvár*), which is considered an “Otomani influence” in the area of the Hatvan culture<sup>7</sup>.

The closest analogies are at Vărșand (Gyulavarsánd) -*Laposhalom* (Arad County). Here the latest archaeological research has uncovered numerous bitronconical vessels such as the one at Hunedoara<sup>8</sup>. Some of these vessels present a short, cylindrical or tronconical foot<sup>9</sup>, while others have a flattened base<sup>10</sup>. In some cases the carina is relieved, forming a border that widens symmetrically in four parts, forming

<sup>5</sup> Andrițoiu 1979, 24.; Luca 1999, 63–64; Luca 2005, 134. We have to note that the Bronze Age materials from *Dealul Sânpetru* come from the dirt that forms the defense vallum of the medieval fortress. No Bronze Age complex or level were discovered during T. Mariș's excavations inside this fortress (Luca 1999, 13). This could suggest a possible secondary position of the prehistoric pottery, which was brought here with the dirt that forms the vallum. Of course, this is only an hypothesis until further systematic research of the fortified plateau, which could find some prehistorical complex bases.

<sup>6</sup> Salvage archaeological research in the spring of 2009 by C.C. Roman and S. Tincu; the research report is being published.

<sup>7</sup> Kalicz 1968, 119, Taf. LXXIV/1a-b; Kalicz 1984, 198, 211, Taf. LVI/10; Csány-Tárnoki 1994, 177, no. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Roska 1941, 48–49, 51, Fig. 14/5, 58; Kalicz 1968, 170; Bóna 1975, 129–131, Taf. 140/8, 10–13 and Taf. 142/12–17.

<sup>9</sup> Roska 1941, 51, Fig. 14/5; Bóna 1975, Taf. 140/10–11.

<sup>10</sup> Bóna 1975, Taf. 140/12–13.



small handles with one or two perforations<sup>11</sup>. The settlement at Vârşand has been attributed for a long time to the Otomani culture, although the similarities between the pottery from Banat and the one discovered north of the Mureş river (Socodor) have been observed during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>12</sup>. Fl. Gogâltan's opinion is that this site marks the northern boundary of the Vatina culture (Corneşti-Crvenka group)<sup>13</sup>.

Other finds, similar to the vessel from Hunedoara were uncovered in Banat, at Vatina<sup>14</sup>, Vrşac-Crvenka<sup>15</sup> and Corneşti-Cornet<sup>16</sup>. Unlike the vessel from Corneşti-Cornet, which has a flattened base<sup>17</sup> – similar to the one in Hunedoara – the ones discovered at Vatina and Vrşac-Crvenka have a tronconical foot. The vessel from Vrşac-Crvenka presents a flat band on which, next to some circular cuts, the perforations for the strings were placed.

Next to the vessel from Vrşac-Crvenka, Pr. Medović, in a synthesis about the prehistory of Voievodina, also presents a vessel which is similar to the one in Hunedoara-Grădina Castelului. It has the same bitronconical shape, short neck, straight rim and the base ends in a small foot. The decoration is almost identical to the one in Hunedoara (the bands of vertically incised lines with hachured rhombs inside)<sup>18</sup>. The vertically incised lines, pulled almost to the base of the neck, where they intersect another set of incised decors (parallel lines and between them zigzagged incisions) are very similar to the ones on the vessel discovered at Korbovo-Obala.

Further away analogies, of the same Vatina-Vrşac phase of the Vatina culture, are three vessels from the eponymous site<sup>19</sup>, but they present a globular, elliptical body, full handles and no obvious carination of the maximum diameter<sup>20</sup>.

As for the closer analogies of the vessel in Hunedoara (Vatina, Vrşac and Corneşti), even if the ornamentation is similar (incised lines) the motifs are different. The typical Vatina items present a generalized incised arcade and parallel lines on the neck base or on the maximum diameter. The hachured triangles are isolated occurrences<sup>21</sup>, as are the alveolated notches on the body<sup>22</sup> and the rhombs<sup>23</sup>.

The closest analogy in the area of the Verbicioara culture is seen in the supposed cenotaph discovered at Korbovo-Obala<sup>24</sup>. The globular, slightly flattened vessel has a short neck, straight rim and flat base, just like the one in Hunedoara-Grădina Castelului. The decoration is similar to the one that was attributed by Pr. Medović to the Vatina culture, but unlike this one, the decoration was placed at the neck base.

From the decoration point of view the vessel from Hunedoara-Grădina Castelului seems to have better affinities to the area of the Verbicioara culture, where both the elongated, inner hachured triangles and the columns of rhombs flanked by lines incised perpendicularly on the alveolated notches on the maximum diameter were determined by G. Crăciunescu as typical for phase III of this culture<sup>25</sup>. Hachured rhombs also appear on pottery discovered at Dubova-Adăpostul lui Climente (Mehedinţi County)<sup>26</sup>, Stenca Liubcovei-Platou (Caraş-Severin County)<sup>27</sup>, Cârcea-Viaduct (Dolj

<sup>11</sup> Bóna 1975, Taf. 142/12–13, 15, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Pârvan 1926, 302–303; Roska 1941, 51, 54.

<sup>13</sup> Gogâltan 1999a, 55–56; Gogâltan 1999b., 206–207.

<sup>14</sup> Milleker 1897, 125, T.II/4a, 136; Wosinsky 1904, 55–56, T. LXXXVI; Milleker 1905, 33, T.XII/1a; Tasić 1974, 209, v. 115.

<sup>15</sup> Garaşanin 1983, 516, T. LXXVIII/10; Morintz 1978, 20, Fig. 2/5. Unlike M. Garaşanin, who includes the vessel in the Vatin-Vrşac phase of the Vatina culture (Garaşanin 1983, 515–516, Pl. LXXVIII/10), N. Tasić considers it a characteristic of the Verbicioara culture, phase III (Tasić 1974, 210, 514, Fig. 139; Tasić 1984, 87, 92, T. XIX/5). J. Uzelac places the discovery at Vatina-Bela bara and he considers it a characteristic of the Early Bronze Age (Uzelac 2002, 54). Pr. Medović also attributes the vessel to the Vatina culture (Medović 2006, 105–106, Sl. 92).

<sup>16</sup> Radu 1972a, 277, Fig. 7/3; Morintz 1978, 20, Fig. 3/1. The neck was not preserved.

<sup>17</sup> The neck is fragmented, broken in the old age (Radu 1972, 277, nr. 2 2).

<sup>18</sup> Medović 2006, 105–106, Sl. 92, with no other definitions. The texture and the color of the vessel suggest a technology which is close to the Verbicioara culture. Without a doubt it has the model of the Vatina culture. The incised or indented ornaments are in favor of the cultural attribution.

<sup>19</sup> One of these vessels with elliptical body was uncovered at Vatina (Garaşanin 1983, T. LVIII/6). N. Tasić includes it in the III<sup>rd</sup> phase of the Verbicioara culture, but he mentions alternatively as place of discovery either Vatina (Tasić 1974, 210, 514, Fig. 140); or Vrşac-Crvenka (Tasić 1984, 87, 92, T. XIX/4).

<sup>20</sup> Garaşanin 1983, 515–516, T. LXXVIII/5–6 and T. LXXIX/1.

<sup>21</sup> On the vessel discovered at Vrşac-Crvenka (Garaşanin 1983, T.LXXVIII/10).

<sup>22</sup> On the vessel discovered at Vatina in 1894 (Milleker 1897, 125, T. II/4a, 136), as well as on that one discovered at Corneşti-Cornet (Radu 1972a, 277, Fig. 7/3).

<sup>23</sup> On one of the vessels with elliptical body discovered at Vatina (Garaşanin 1983, T. LXXVIII/6).

<sup>24</sup> Krstić 1984, 104–107, Fig. 81/4; Şandor-Chicideanu 2003, 238, nr. 150.

<sup>25</sup> Crăciunescu 2004, 187, 378. Pl. CX.

<sup>26</sup> Gumă 1997, Pl. XLV/8; Crăciunescu 2004, 269, Pl. 1/10.

<sup>27</sup> Gumă 1977, 80, Pl. VIII/1, 85–86, the hachured rhombs are horizontal, above the maximum diameter. Such decoration, flanked by double incised lines also appears on the wide handle of a vessel found at Cârcea-Viaduct (Nica 1996, 25, Fig. 8/2).

County)<sup>28</sup>, Broșteni-*Adăpători* (Dolj County)<sup>29</sup>, Rogova-*La cazărmi* (Mehedinți County)<sup>30</sup>.

Typical Verbicioara ornamental motifs are present as well on vessels attributed to the Vatina culture. In the eponymous settlement a relatively bitronconical (with a slightly globular upper half) vessel was discovered. It had a trumpet-like, short neck and straight rim. Above the flattened border, next to each small, vertically perforated handle, a small field – up to the neck base – was decorated with groups of oblique, intersected lines, thus creating the illusion of a column of hachured rhombs. This decor is flanked by bands of two, deeply incised lines<sup>31</sup>. If this vessel really belongs to the Vatina culture, than, without a doubt the decor was imported from the direct contacts with the Verbicioara culture, in the area of Vrșac and Vatina.

In a succinct analysis finds flattened doubly conical vessels (*Hängegefäße*) of crop area and Vatina Verbicioara, it appears that this type of vessel has a greater frequency in the cultural area whose repertoire Vatina ceramic forms indicate a certain preference to carination. This form of vessel was taken by the bearers Verbicioara culture too. The existence of these cultural contacts is illustrated by biconical vessel from Vatina (presented by Pr. Medović<sup>32</sup>) and by the one discovered at Korbovo-*Obala* (a good form analogy). Both advocate for the existence of extensive cultural contacts, evidenced by the exchange of vessel shapes and decorations.

Thus, even if the Vatina-like shape and decoration typical of Verbicioara culture (phase III) make difficult the cultural attribution of the vessel found in Castle Garden, the combination of archaeological material culture typical Verbicioara discovered in a restricted area, calls for attributing the bitronconical vessel found at Hunedoara to Verbicioara culture, phase III.

The mug with two handles discovered at Hunedoara-Sânpetru Hill-Filtration Plant, by the characteristic form finds its closest analogy in the area of Verbicioara (phases III–IV) and Tei (phase IV) cultures. In the opinion of some of the researchers the last two phases of Verbicioara and Tei cultures (phases IV–V) can be regrouped in a distinct cultural manifestation, respectively

Govora<sup>33</sup> group or Govora-Fundeni<sup>34</sup> group. The types of incised decor and the association of these types, restrain the geographic area to Oltenia area and Danube Gorges area, space in which evolved the so call fourth phase of Verbicioara culture<sup>35</sup>.

From the shape point of view, relatively good analogies can be found in the vessels deposit discovered near the monastery from Govora-village (Vâlcea County)<sup>36</sup>. Unlike the mug from Hunedoara, the ones discovered in Govora village have a profiled base and decor, although it preserves Verbicioara methods characteristic for phase III, as technical achievement, they are different. Elongated triangles that are based on the maximum diameter are divided by lines and not hachured. In addition, there is a slight trend towards a narrowing neck which receives a truncated form. Another close analogy is the mug discovered at Cârcea-Viaduct<sup>37</sup>. Excepting the missing protomes from the maximum curvature of the handles, the mug from Cârcea resembles the one from Hunedoara in the incised decoration as well; the decoration consists of hachured triangles pointing down, stretched almost to the maximum diameter, located on the top half of cup; on the neck there are ordered notches flanked by incised lines. The mug found at Cârcea-Viaduct was placed by M. Nica in “Verbicioara IIIA” phase<sup>38</sup>. Globular mugs, with short neck and straight rim, with raised handles provided with different sized protomas were discovered at Verbicioara-*La Cetate*<sup>39</sup> too.

Another similar form with the one from Hunedoara is the cup discovered at Stenca Liubcova-*Platou*. The typically Verbicioara culture vessel is regarded as an import in the Vatina environment<sup>40</sup>.

This cup is not only characteristic to Verbicioara phase III. Similar forms are found in phase II of Verbicioara culture, its existence is prolonged, with slight changes, as is evidenced by the fragmentary mug from Ponoarele, until Verbicioara IV<sup>41</sup> (or Govora/Govora-Fundeni

<sup>28</sup> Nica 1996, 25, Fig. 8/1–2.

<sup>29</sup> Nica 1996, 25, Fig. 9/1.

<sup>30</sup> Crăciunescu 2004, 281, 113–114, Pl. XIII/3. The shard is decorated with rhombs formed by criss-crossing the three incised lines. The vessel was dated in stage I of Verbicioara.

<sup>31</sup> Tasić 1974, 191, T.XX, 518, Fig. 151.

<sup>32</sup> The hachured rhombs the vessel are like the ones on the vessel from Hunedoara-*Grădina Castelului*.

<sup>33</sup> Hänsel 1976, 57–61; Șandor-Chicideanu 2003, 199–201.

<sup>34</sup> Palincaș 1996, 257 and note 40.

<sup>35</sup> Crăciunescu 2004, 157–158.

<sup>36</sup> Berciu *et alii*, 1961, 138, Abb. 8/1–6 and 139, Abb. 9/1/2; Morintz 1978, 68–69, Fig. 40–41; Govora 1995, 49–50, Fig. 8; Crăciunescu 2004, 31, nr. 60–62/I.

<sup>37</sup> Nica 1996, 26–28, Fig. 12/10.

<sup>38</sup> Nica 1996, 26–28, Fig. 12/10; Crăciunescu 2004, 331, Pl. LXIII/5.

<sup>39</sup> Berciu 1961, 134, Fig. 5/1–5; Morintz 1978, 25, Fig. 10/1–3, 5–6; Crăciunescu 2004, 127–128, 311, Pl. XLIII/11, 13 and 326, Pl. LVIII/1.

<sup>40</sup> Gumă 1977, 80, Pl. VIII/1, 85–86.

<sup>41</sup> Crăciunescu 1996, 42, nr. 27, Pl. VII/4; Crăciunescu 2004, 136, 340, Pl. LXXII/1.

group). In Verbicioara phase II, the protomes from the two handles are more common but the handles are angled, being slightly broken in the area of maximum curvature. Among the specimens similar to the mug from Hunedoara are the ones discovered at Bârca (Dolj County)<sup>42</sup> and the one from Cârcea-*Viaduct* (Dolj County)<sup>43</sup>.

The mug discovered at Hunedoara-Sânpetru Hill-Water filtration station, is typical for the forms repertoire and ornaments characteristic of phase III Verbicioara culture, but the shape of the mug and some ornaments characteristic to the earlier phases of Verbicioara culture will survive in the next phase too, identified either as Verbicioara IV or the group Govora / Govora-Fundeni group. From the chronological point of view the fragmentary mug from Hunedoara is dated in Verbicioara III phase, without excluding a belonging to a much latter horizon, respectively Verbicioara IV (Govora/Govora-Fundeni).

The sherd (bowl/cup?) from Toamnei Street has few analogies. As a shape it is close to the finds at Curmătura-*Măgura* (Dolj County)<sup>44</sup> and Reșca-*Romula-Villa suburbana* (Dolj County)<sup>45</sup>. The vessel from Curmătura-*Măgura* presents a smaller rim diameter than the maximum diameter of the slightly globular body, the short neck with a straight rim is clearly delimited from the shoulder by a groove. The decoration is formed by hachured, slightly elongated, upwardly tipped triangles, incised lines and notches, part of which are also found on the vessel from Hunedoara<sup>46</sup>.

As for the incised decoration, the vessel from Hunedoara-*Str. Toamnei* has good analogies in the Verbicioara environ, especially its 3<sup>rd</sup> stage, when double bands of incised lines exist at the same time with triangles and notches disposed under the rim or on the maximum diameter<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> The mug presents a globular body, a short neck and straight rim; abruptly over-heightened handles are “broken” and come down on the maximum diameter area. Next to the broken curvature the handles are decorated with cylindrical protomes. The decoration consists of hachured triangles, delimited by bands of incised lines) (Nica 1996, 21–23, Fig. 5/6).

<sup>43</sup> The mug is fragmented; it presents a bitronconical body, slightly carinated, a short neck and a very slightly everted rim. The handles are slightly “broken” on the upper curvature (the are angular) and are decorated with semi-spherical protomes (Nica 1996, 22, Fig. 5/1).

<sup>44</sup> Nica 1996, Fig. 7/9a-b.

<sup>45</sup> Nica 1996, Fig. 16/7; Crăciunescu 2004, 331, Pl. LXIII/7.

<sup>46</sup> The vessel presents traces of a handle which was broken in the old age, a fact which includes it in the mug-like category. Chronologically, the vessel is attributed to phase III of Verbicioara (Crăciunescu 2004, 128–129, 327, Pl. LIX/9a-b).

<sup>47</sup> Crăciunescu 2004, 130, 378. Pl. CX.

Even if the stratigraphic context of the Hunedoara finds is not very edifying for naming chronological synchronisms between Wietenberg and Verbicioara cultures, they are very important in helping us understand the cultural contacts between the Wietenberg, Vatina and Verbicioara cultures.

The knowledge of the economical-cultural relations between Wietenberg and Vatina (group Cornești-Crvenka<sup>48</sup>) are tributary to the current stage of research and the published materials<sup>49</sup>. Some chronological synchronisms between the two cultures are possible based on discoveries in Vatina environment of imports or influences of the Wietenberg culture. Such finds are the ones from Socodor-*Căvăjdia* (Arad County)<sup>50</sup>, Cornești-*Cornet* (Timiș County)<sup>51</sup> and Oreșac-*Židovar*<sup>52</sup>. O. Radu, referring to the contacts of the Vatina communities with the Otomani ones, notes the existence of Vatina vessels at Alba Iulia<sup>53</sup>. The bitronconical vessel from *Grădina Castelului* in Hunedoara, by its characteristically Vatina shape, indicates economical and cultural connections on large spaces; the Verbicioara-like decoration is determinant in the cultural attribution of the vessel.

As I. Andrițoiu noticed, Verbicioara culture “offers little possibilities for parallels with the Wietenberg culture”<sup>54</sup>. Based on types of decors which are common to both cultures (circles united with tangents, spirals formed by chained “S”-s, stamped triangles disposed as lines) we can make some chronological parallels that suggest the existence of direct contacts between the two cultures. In

<sup>48</sup> Gogăltan 1996, 46; Gogăltan 1999a, 51–52; Gogăltan 2004, 91–98, with the discussion concerning the terminology.

<sup>49</sup> Andrițoiu 1992, p. 48.

<sup>50</sup> Roska 1941, 45, 51, 55–56; Popescu 1956, 73, Fig. 33/2–3; Chidioșan 1980, 89, nr. 30; *Rep.Arad...*, 1999, 118, nr. 2 (s.v. V. Vasiliev) were the settlement from Socodor-*„Căvăjdia”* is attributed to the Otomani culture among the discoveries are also Vatina and Wietenberg III imports; Gogăltan 1980, 55.

<sup>51</sup> Soroceanu-Radu 1975, 38–39, notes in section A of trench S.I plateau (excavated in 1973), in level II, “a high bowl, lobated, ornamented with meanders filled with *Zahnstempelung* was discovered” typical Wietenberg. After restoration the oblique position of the lobes suggest an affinity with Vatina and as such the authors have considered the vessel a mix of Vatina and Wietenberg III elements. This parallel is also noted by Chidioșan (Chidioșan 1980, 88, no. 6), I. Andrițoiu (Andrițoiu 1992, 48) and Fl. Gogăltan (Gogăltan 1999a, 55).

<sup>52</sup> Lazić 1997, 29, Fig. 16, 33–34, at Oreșac-*Židovar* a pedestal of vessel with typical Wietenberg ornaments was discovered.

<sup>53</sup> Vessels of Vatina type are also noted in the collections of the National Museum of History of Transylvania, but “the origin of some are questionable” (Radu 1972b, 36).

<sup>54</sup> Andrițoiu 1992, 48.

the north-eastern area of Verbicioara (north-eastern Oltenia) a shard was discovered, which had a decor with meanders; this can work as an argument for a possible synchronization of phase III Wietenberg with the so called phase IV of Verbicioara<sup>55</sup> (or group Govora<sup>56</sup>/Govora-Fundeni<sup>57</sup>). In the more recent internal period of Wietenberg, done by N. Boroffka, stage Verbicioara III corresponds with stage Wietenberg B, while stage Verbicioara IV is synchronized with Wietenberg C, namely with periods Bz. B – Bz. C from P. Reinecke<sup>58</sup>'s modified system. G. Crăciunescu, just like D. Berciu<sup>59</sup>, divides the evolution of Verbicioara in five stages, in which phases Verbicioara III–IV correspond with phases Bz. B<sub>2</sub> – Bz. C<sup>60</sup>.

### Conclusions

The three fragmented vessels discovered in the southwestern Hunedoara in *Grădina Castelului* and *Dealul Sâmpetru* are, in the current stage of research, Wietenberg imports. They can be attributed to the Verbicioara, most likely in phase III, without excluding a possible timeframe at the beginning of phase Verbicioara IV (or Govora/Govora-Fundeni), a time when the traditions of phases Verbicioara II and III were still very strong<sup>61</sup>.

The Verbicioara finds can be chronologically attributed at the earliest toward the Middle Bronze Age III and at the latest at the beginning of Late Bronze Age I (by the chronological timeframe proposed by Fl. Gogâltan<sup>62</sup>), stages that correspond to the periods Bz. B<sub>1</sub> – Bz. B<sub>2</sub>/Bz. C in P. Reinecke's modified chronological system.

The area of the typical Verbicioara artifacts at the periphery of the Wietenberg culture is hard to define. The Verbicioara III map of discoveries indicates their grouping in eastern Oltenia. The finds from Căzănești and Bârsești (Vâlcea County), along the Olt River suggest a possible entry point of these artifacts. This hypothesis is supported by the finds attributed to the next stage (Verbicioara IV–V) in the same area<sup>63</sup>.

A second point of entry into Hunedoara could be through the west, on the valleys of Jiu affluents,

most likely on Motru<sup>64</sup>. Discoveries belonging to the Verbicioara culture are signaled in *Cauce Cave*, next to Wietenberg artifacts and items belonging to Balta Sărată group<sup>65</sup>. The existence of cultural contacts in the interference area between the Vatina and Verbicioara cultures (in eastern Banat) could be suggested by the bitronconical, flattened vessel discovered in *Grădina Castelului*<sup>66</sup>.

Unfortunately, the unsecured contexts in which the Verbicioara items were discovered in *Grădina Castelului* and *Toamnei Street*<sup>67</sup>, leave opened the discussion about the incontestable cultural synchronisms and the itinerary of these imports into the Wietenberg culture.

Translation DELIA MARIA ROMAN

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<sup>55</sup> Andrișoiu 1992, 48; Crăciunescu 2004, 189.

<sup>56</sup> Hänsel 1976, 57–61; Șandor-Chicideanu 2003, 199–201.

<sup>57</sup> Palincaș 1996, 257 and note 40.

<sup>58</sup> Boroffka 1994, 249–251, 258, table 14.

<sup>59</sup> Berciu 1961, 152.

<sup>60</sup> Crăciunescu 2004, 156, 382, Pl. CXIV (chronological table).

<sup>61</sup> Crăciunescu 2004, 168.

<sup>62</sup> Gogâltan 1999, 208–209.

<sup>63</sup> Crăciunescu 2004, 365, Pl. XCVII.

<sup>64</sup> Crăciunescu 2004, 366, Pl. XCVIII.

<sup>65</sup> Luca et alii 2005, 47, Pl. XV/6, XVI/1.

<sup>66</sup> An alternate route could be the Upper Timiș Valley, through the eastern part of Banat. The hypothesis of cultural and economic contacts between the Wietenberg and Verbicioara cultures on this commercial route is supported by Verbicioara finds at Ogradena and Băile Herculane (Nica 1996, Fig. 1).

<sup>67</sup> The artifacts from Hunedoara-Dealul Sâmpetru-*Stația de Filtrare a apei* are about to be published.

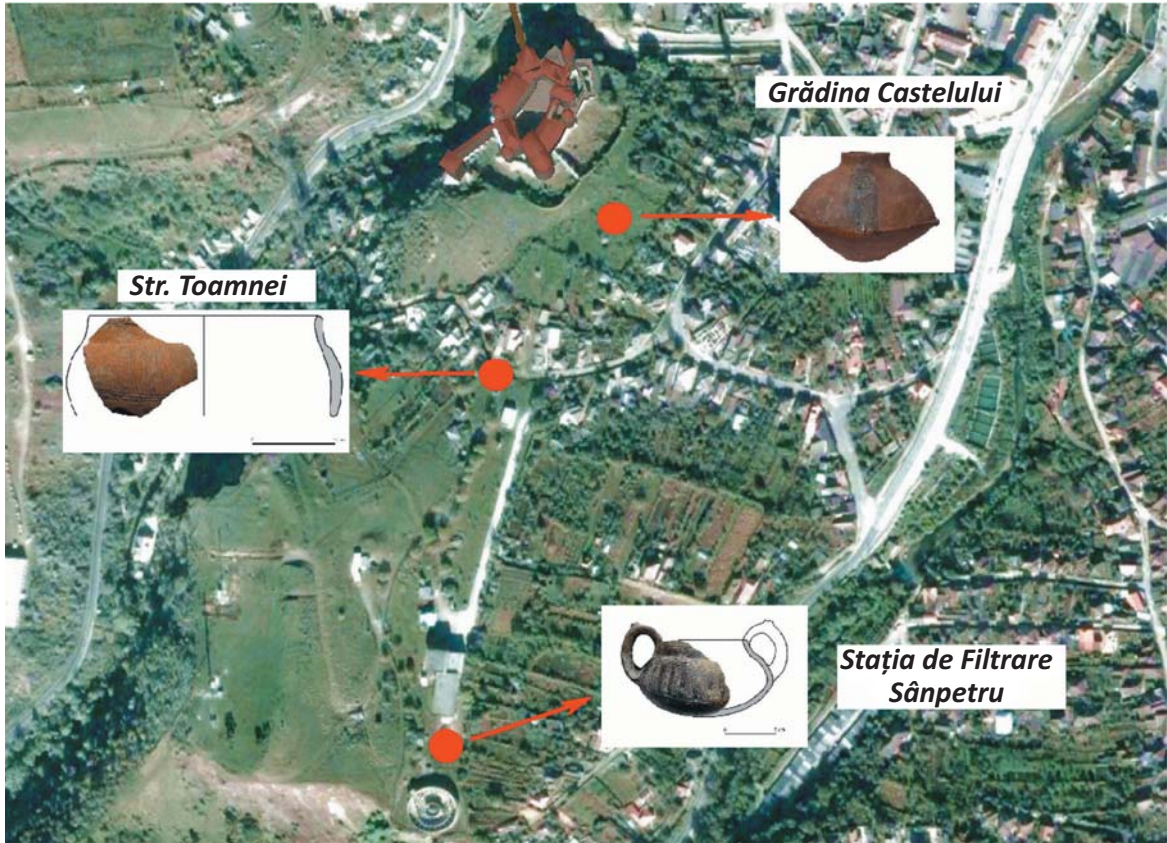
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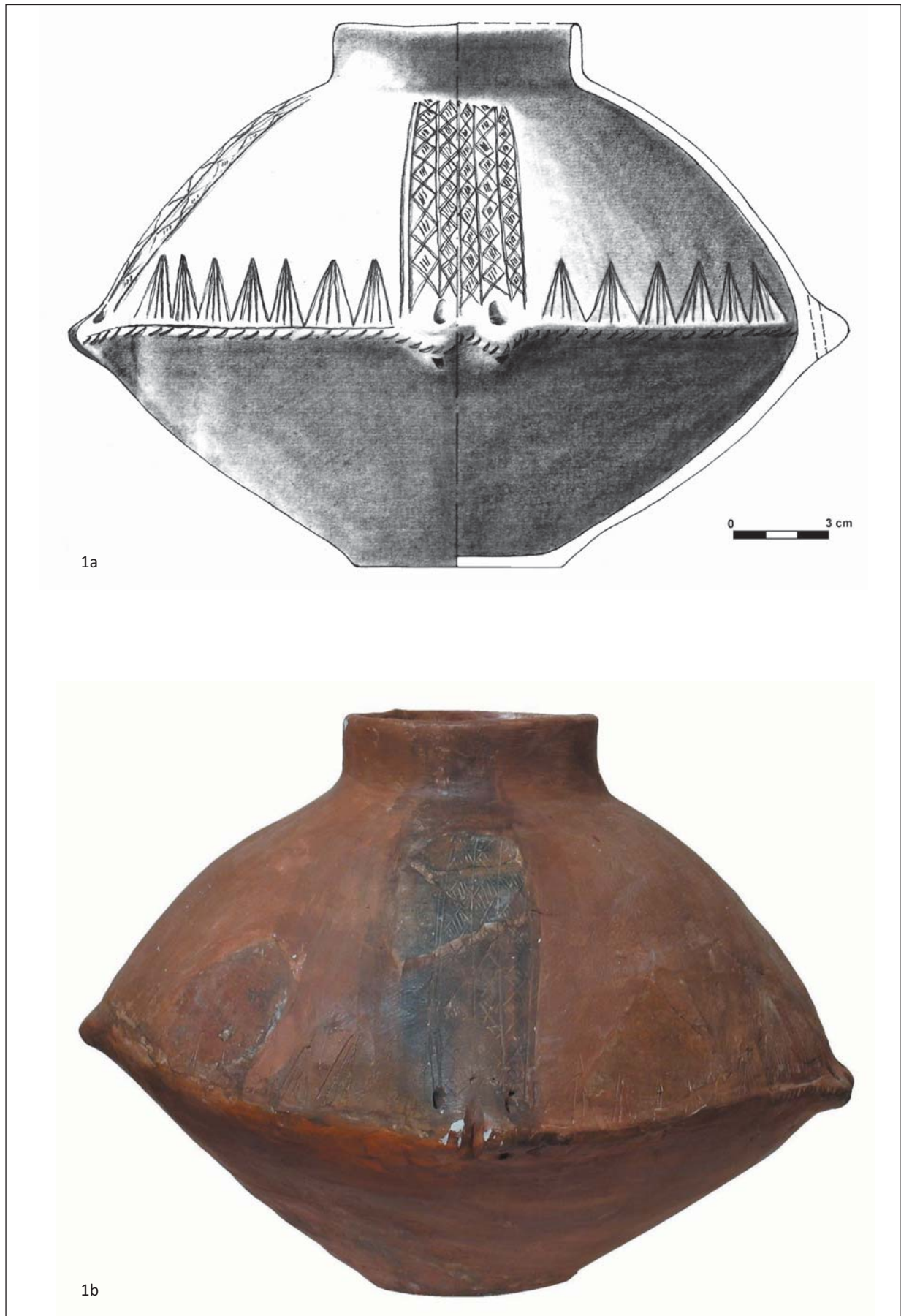


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Pl. I. 1 – Hunedoara (photo from Google Earth); 2 – Location of the Verbicioara discoveries.



Pl. II. 1 a-b. Drawing and photo of the bitronconic vessel discovered at Hunedoara-Grădina Castelului





Pl. III. 1. Fragmented cup discovered at Hunedoara-Dealul Sânpetru (*Stația de Filtrare*); 2. Fragmented vessel (cup/bowl?) discovered at Hunedoara-*Str. Toamnei*

