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**THE PIȘCOLT GROUP IN THE NORTH WESTERN PART OF
ROMANIA AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS**

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Chapter I. The origin of the Pișcolt group

The origin of the Pișcolt group is tightly related to the final phase of the Criș culture in Romania, of the Körös and Linear Ceramic Culture in the north eastern and eastern part of Hungary, of the Linear Ceramic Culture in the settlements of the Subcarpathian Ukraine, as well as in the south eastern part of Slovakia. These connections start to develop especially in the early phase of the group in what concerns the shape of the vessels, the non painted ornaments, the material used for degreasing, etc. Due to the fact that this cultural trend is present on the territory of four actual states, its origin is differently interpreted by the Romanian, Hungarian, Slovakian and Ukrainian specialists, although it has common features like the ornaments taken from the Criș-Körös culture, the Linear culture, or influences of the Vinča culture.

Between 1970-1980 the Körös type discoveries in the Middle Tisa River area have grown in number, but still the limit zone identified by N. Kalicz and J. Makkay¹ has not been crossed. New ideas in what concerns the scientific research on the Szatmár group have appeared due to the findings from Kőtelek-Huszársarok, where archaeological sites from the late Körös culture and Szatmár (ex. Szatmár II) type were identified, ornaments with indentations, incised lines, pinching and also painted ornaments. In P. Raczky's opinion, at the genesis of the Szatmár group, the Mesolithic populations from the area and the populations of the Körös culture from the Upper Tisa River region as well as from the Someș² Valley have largely contributed. In the same period, N. Kalicz due to the research he had carried out at Méhtelek, near the Romanian border, defines the old phase of the Szatmár group as a phase of the Körös group, which belongs to the Criș/Körös Culture in Transilvania, and the advanced phase of the Szatmár II is redefined as Szatmár group, being the early phase of the ALP (ALP I)³ culture.

This domination of the Körös culture over the genesis of the Szatmár group, respectively the early Pișcolt, has halted after the Mesolithic discoveries from the Jászság⁴ area. According to the environment analysis and to the research carried out by R. Kertész and P. Sümegi, an agro-ecological barrier would have existed at the limit of spreading of the Neolithic cultures, defined by N. Kalicz and J. Makkay, a barrier that stopped the spreading of the populations at the northern limit (Kunhegyes-Berettyóújfalú), due to the lack of conditions that would technically allow the communities to settle there (climate, livestock breeding terrain and plant cultivation)⁵. In the recent years due to the research, the line has extended to a distance of 35 kilometers from the point that was established in the 1970s. The

¹ Raczky 1980, 32.

² Raczky 1983, 189; 1986, 27-29; 1988, 29.

³ Kalicz, 1994 68; Kalicz 2011, 45-46; Kalicz, Koós 2014, 9.

⁴ Domboróczki 2012, nota. 39.

⁵ Kertész, Sümegi, 2003, 27. Fig. 1

excavations from the Tiszaszőlös-Domaháza had proved that in the area of the Middle Tisa River the expansion of the Körös culture did not stop, moreover, at the same site the Körös culture and the Szatmár⁶ group communities have settled. Makkay, after the latest research in the Jászág area, argues that the adaptation of the immigrant communities represented by the Szatmár group as an early phase of the ALP took place in the valley of the Middle Tisa River⁷, the same idea sustained by Emese Gyöngyvér Nagy⁸.

In the south eastern part of Slovakia several Mesolithic populations of trans-Carpathian origin were present; they came from the Black Sea area. On their territories, the early Linear Ceramic Culture bearers arrived, they had come from the Hernad valley from the eastern part of Hungary, and they started to take control over the obsidian sources from the Prešov-Tokaj area, thus we have the earliest Neolithic presence in the area⁹. Šiška's opinion in what concerns the ceramic material discovered at the Košice-Červený rak, decorated with finger indentations, is that of having some connections with the Criș- Körös culture bearers; based on the analogies from Méhtelek¹⁰, it was proven as incorrect, these ornaments being present in the early Linear Ceramic Culture from the south eastern part of Slovakia¹¹, a fact proven by the C14¹² dating.

In the Romanian sphere of research, after the first studies in the area of Carei, the early Neolithic communities were connected by another component which represents the old local Mesolithic populations, characterized by the usage of obsidian and silex microlite tools of Tardenoisian origin, through which an early dating¹³ was attempted, although in the already mentioned area we have few Mesolithic discoveries¹⁴. A new impulse appeared in what concerns the genesis of the Linear Ceramic Culture and the Pișcolt cultural group, after a growing number of research activities carried out in the Ier Valley and in the Nir Depression between 1970-1977. At the beginning of the 1980s, researchers Gh. Lazarovici and J. Némethi consider that at the genesis of the early linear ceramic the earliest Vinča Culture manifestations contributed, together with elements from Starčevo-Criș IVA phase and other elements belonging to the previous cultural horizons from the Mesolithic or Epipaleolithic¹⁵. The researchers try to bring arguments about the genetic bonds of Starčevo-Criș IVA-Vinča A2 horizon with different ceramic shapes, small altars and pinching ornaments on ceramic fragments and also a lip marked by an incision; there are some other pieces that represent the earliest manifestations of linear origin, but also a ceramic painted group¹⁶. These elements are also present in the discoveries from the Berea-Ciumești area from the Kovács¹⁷ collection. In the opinion of other authors, at the genesis of the linear ceramic culture took part early Neolithic communities in their latest phase, at the northern

⁶Domboróczki 2005, 5-15; 2010, 137-177; 2012, 60; Domboróczki, Raczky 2010, 191-219, 210.

⁷Makkay 1996, 43.

⁸Nagy 1998, 85.

⁹Kacanowska et al. 1997, 268.

¹⁰Šiška 1989, 114.

¹¹Kozłowski, Nowak, 2010, 72;

¹²Kozłowski, Nowak, 2010, 86;

¹³Comșa 1963, 477-484; Comșa 1972-73, 39-49; Comșa 1973, 31-43; Păunescu 1963, 465-475.

¹⁴Némethi 1999, 94, fig. 38; 119.

¹⁵Lazarovici, Némethi 1983, 26-27.

¹⁶Lazarovici, Némethi 1983, 26, Fig. 7/4, 6-7, 9-10, Fig. 8; Fig. 9/3; Fig. 27/6;

¹⁷Virag 2008, 91-124.

periphery of the Starčevo-Criș culture, in general in the north eastern and eastern part of Hungary and Slovakia, through the neolithisation of the local¹⁸ epipaleolithic communities or through the development of a late Starčevo-Criș culture that together with other elements (especially from the Vinča culture) lead to the birth of the linear group called Szatmár-Berea-Ciumești-Săcuieni¹⁹.

In her study, Zoia Maxim argues that the origin of the Pișcolt group is to be found in the starčevian old background with Vinča elements that appeared in the lowlands, to which certain elements found in the Middle Tisa River area from the Szolnok-Szanda, Öcsöd-Kiritó, Kőtelek-Huszársarok, Tiszavalk-Négyes contributed, a genesis that took place during Starčevo-Criș IVA/IVB-Vinča A2/A3²⁰.

More recently, in the specialty literature, the origin of this group is seen through the evolution of the Starčevo-Criș local communities, isolated from its general evolution, to which elements that represent an influence of the Balcano-Anatolian Chalcolitic are added, together with Vincian²¹ elements and some other elements painted in black, elements found in the early stages of the Dimini²² culture.

Chapter II. The spreading area

The Pișcolt cultural group can be found in the north western part of Romania, dating back to the advanced Neolithic age, being part of a larger cultural horizon of a civilization that binds several cultures or cultural groups whose ceramic material was decorated with painted motives, named "*Painted Pottery Culture*". This horizon can be found in the north western part of Romania, north eastern Hungary, south eastern Slovakia and in the sub-Carpathian region of Ukraine. The first discoveries tagged in this very cultural group from the studied territory began in the 1960s and 1970s, almost in every country where it is present.

Chapter III. Denomination

Considering the fact that this group is spread on a several countries' territory, in the specialty literature is known under several denominations. In Hungary the first painted ceramic discoveries appear at the beginning of the 20th century, known in the specialty literature as *sátoraljaújhelyi*, - painted ceramic of Sátoraljaújhely type; a city from the north eastern part of Hungary²³, but similar fragments have also been discovered at Szamosályi-rév and Szamosújlak²⁴, and later, such discoveries were found in a smaller zone of the Upper Tisa River (Tiszahát), at Sonkád, Kisvarsány, Vásárosnamény under the name of *Ceramica*

¹⁸Ursulescu 2001, 144.

¹⁹Luca et al. 2000, 53.

²⁰Maxim 1999, 75.

²¹Lazarovici, Lazarovici, 2006, 441; Suciu 2009, 178.

²²Virag 2004-2005, 20.

²³Visegrádi 1907, 297-287; 1912, 244-261

²⁴Sőregi 1937, 62. Fig. 19

*pictată din zona Someșului*²⁵ (Painted Ceramics from the Someș area). In a complex monograph dedicated to the Linear Ceramic Culture of *Alföld type* (*Alföld Linear Pottery Culture – ALP*), it is known under the name: group Szatmár II (recently just Szatmár) or AVK I, for the period with less painted motives, and Esztár, with a large variety of painted ornaments²⁶. In Slovakia it is known under the following names: Proto-Kopčany, Kopčany și Raškovce²⁷, in the sub-Carpathian Ukraine is known as Diakovo²⁸. In the case of Romania, this cultural group received the name of Pișcolt²⁹ group, and it was situated between Cluj-Cheile-Turzii-Lumea-Nouă-Iclod (CCTLNZIS), defined as a civilization of the developed or the advanced³⁰ Neolithic.

The Pișcolt group was first defined as the Ciumești culture having at its base the Kovács³¹ collection and the research carried out by E. Comșa and Al. Păunescu in the nearby area of Carei, at the border of Ciumești-Berea³² communes with a two phase evolution process, found at Berea I (Stavila Mică/Kisrengátja), and a second phase, a more evolved one with a larger number of painted ceramics at Berea IX (Togul lui Sultész/Sultész tag)³³. After the research that was carried out between 1970-1977 nearby the Pișcolt borderline, at a certain point called *Lutărie*, *Nisipărie* and *Cărămidărie*, Tiream, Sanislău, the Ciumești culture, was renamed by Gh. Lazarovici și J. Némethi the Pișcolt group, because the most representative pieces were found at Pișcolt and not at Ciumești³⁴. The last attempt to redefine this cultural group belonged to Doina Ignat under the name of Sântandrei-Oradea-Săcuieni-Vărzari, where she argued that in the specialty literature already existed a Pișcolt group during the Bronze Age (Grupul Pișcolt-Cehăluți-Hajdúbagos)³⁵, a denomination that can lead to confusions³⁶. The most famous denomination in the professional research on the Romanian territory is that of Pișcolt group/culture, and it was pointed out by the ceramic material and its ceramic ornaments in three evaluative phases³⁷.

Chapter IV. Evolution

The Pișcolt culture has three well established evolution phases, mainly based on the ceramic material, taking into account elements such as: pinching, incised lines, Lippenrand rims, the diversity of the painted decoration, but also certain manufacturing elements of the ceramic, burning and smoothing technique and the ceramic shapes³⁸.

²⁵Korek 1977, 3-52; 1983, 26

²⁶Kalicz, Makkay 1977a, 106; Raczky 1988, 1989, 235; Goldman, Szenánszky 1994, 225-230; Makkay 2003, 108

²⁷Vizdal 1997, 43-141; Šiška 1974, 3-13; 1982, 261-270; Vizdal 1997, 101-142.

²⁸Pothusniak 1997, 35-50; Pothusniak 1999, 9-36.

²⁹Lazarovici, Némethi 1983, 36.

³⁰Lazarovici, Némethi 1983, 23; Maxim 1999, 76; Virag 2000-2004, 13; Lazarovici 2009, 181;

³¹Némethi 1997, 63-75, Fig. 5; Némethi 1999, 165; Virag 2008, 91, Fig.1

³²Comșa 1963, 477-484; Comșa 1972-73, 39-49; Comșa 1973, 31-43; Comșa, Nánási 1972, 11; Păunescu 1963, 465-475.

³³Comșa 1987, 32.

³⁴Lazarovici, Némethi 1983, 36; 120, 167.

³⁵Némethi 1999, 105, 125

³⁶Ignat 1987, 46.

³⁷Lazarovici, Némethi 1983, 27-34.

³⁸Maxim 1999, 76; Virag 2004-2005, 20.

The first progressive phase of the Pișcolt culture, as it was already mentioned, is formed by elements from the final phase of the Starčevo-Criș culture with influences of Balcano-Anatolian Chalcolithic and elements from the Vinča culture³⁹. This early phase is mostly present in the discoveries from Câmpia Careiului (Lowlands of Carei), in Valea Ierului (Ier Valley) and in Nir (Nyírség). The container shapes from this phase are characterized through pots that date from the late phase of the Starčevo-Criș culture: bitronconical pots (bowl, tureen, short lipped bitronconical pots), but also elements of the Vinča culture (biconical plates, pedestaled bowl, fruitstands).

In this phase of evolution the largest difference in comparison with the others is the preservation and the usage of the ornaments typical to the genesis of the Starčevo-Criș culture (pinching, nail or finger work, thrusts and indentations) and some other linear elements and also combinations between the two. The painted motives are still in an incipient phase being represented by a method called „*pictură perlată*” or (perled painting), which is maintained until the end of phase I or the beginning of phase II, when their number decreases or they simply disappear. In this very phase the picture that is directly applied on the surface of the pots, appears, but without the usage of the slip or angobe, a method present only in phases II and III.

In the second phase, a more advanced one, we can notice an evolution in what concerns the nature of the ceramics: mixture, burning, smoothing, polishing and the finishing of the surfaces, especially on the painted ceramics, which is at its evolutionary peak in that period. The ceramic shapes from this phase tend to experience almost the same evolution as in the previous phase, but there are also new shapes out of which some will develop in the late phase. The middle phase of the Pișcolt culture refers to the most important change compared to the formative stage and can be observed on the ceramics decoration. Just as we saw in the description of the ornaments in the first phase, besides the painted motives, the decorative unpainted motives are also present almost in the same amount; these motives that find their origin in the Starčevo-Criș culture (pinching, thrusts, nail or finger work) or linear elements (incisions, cuts, etc.). These motives grow shorter in the settlements that are dated in the second phase of the Pișcolt culture compared with the first phase.

When we refer to the decorative painted motives and after a thorough examination of the closed complexes (pits) we notice that the motives of the picture are rather varied, reaching the evolutionary peak of the culture. It disappears or it is very rarely present the material decorated with the black perled painting technique „*pictura neagră perlată*”. The ceramics in some cases have a „metallic” gloss covered with a brown, brick-red or burgundy colored slip, and upon which the black colored or brownish geometric motives, lines, arcades, spirals, etc., are painted. This evolution in the quality of the ceramics and in the diverse usage of the decorative motives can be observed in every settlement from the second phase in the north western part of Romania and abroad.

In the last studies that were published by Gh. Lazarovici and C. Virag the advanced phase of the Pișcolt culture (Phase II) was divided in two sub-phases Pișcolt IIA and Pișcolt IIB. This division was made according to the evolution of the ceramics (nature, smoothing, degreasing, ornamental motives, etc.). In the second stage of the evolutionary phase (middle),

³⁹Lazarovici, Lazarovici, 2006, 441; Suciú 2009, 178

some elements appear in the manufacturing process and in the ornamentation that will evolve in the final phase. The nature of the ceramics in some cases becomes more porous and soapy, the surface smoothing decays in quality, the metallic gloss fragments become fewer, the painted motives become more simple and lesser and the unpainted motives are even fewer. In some cases the good quality slip. Is replaced with an angobe of white or yellow color. The settlements that date from this period would be Halmeu-Vamă⁴⁰, Blaja-Grind-Cehal⁴¹, Căpleni-Drumul Căminului⁴².

The last phase of the Pișcolt group is represented by a declining quality in what concerns the ceramics. This decay can be noticed in both the manufacturing of the pots and in their ornamentation. In this period we have few discoveries in the north western part of Romania and in the surrounding areas.

In Phase III we have more elements that differ from the previous phases, especially in what concerns the nature of the ceramics. The already observed and tagged elements in the second stage of phase II (Pișcolt IIB) are more obvious. Due to the usage of some tougher degreasing materials in comparison with the vegetal remnants or chaff, the ceramic becomes more porous and of lower quality. The old ornamentation elements found in the entire evolution process of phase I, and also in phase II, but in smaller numbers, they almost lack entirely, having a presence of roughly 3% in the majority of the researched complexes in the entire spreading area. The usage of the slip. As a stone background decays or disappears and the angobe of different colors (white, yellow) appears, process that will evolve in the cultures from the beginning of the late Neolithic. The painted motives that were used are less complex in comparison with the first phase of evolution, only a part of the pots' surface being decorated. The geometrical motives that appear in this evolutionary phase are going to evolve in the advanced Neolithic inside the Tisa-Herpály civilization.

Chapter V. Settlements

The most important factor that biased and still biases the communities is the geographic environment, through its various landscapes, outlines the position of the settlement and the economic activities, such as: livestock breeding, agriculture, hunting, fishing, nearby water source and raw material positioning. A vital role is played by the presence of the rivers and lakes and of course their quality (fresh or salt water), each of them having a bias on the community. The climate and the wind shifts, the quantity of the water, the soil type, they all represent crucial factors that influence the construction of dwellings and of course their orientation. The geological environment determines as well, the life term of the settlement and the nature of occupations- salt resources, stone tools equipment, soil types for agriculture, grazing, pottering⁴³. In this matter we would like to mention the preference of the Neolithic communities for the following soil types: black earth, loess, fact that be observed from a high concentration of settlements in these areas⁴⁴.

⁴⁰Virag 2004b, 25-33.

⁴¹Virag 2007, 27-42.

⁴²Németi 2014, in press.

⁴³Maxim 1999, 12; Virag 2004-2005, 15

⁴⁴Comșa 1987, 14

Thereby, the Szatmár, the Pişcolt cultural group bearers, and some other related groups have proven a predilection towards the emplacement of their settlements on river courses, on a series of positive relief forms, small heights etc., with hilly aspect that dominate the general surface of the terrain with approximately 4-5m⁴⁵. In the spreading area of this cultural group we have found several settlements on the non floodable islands of the swamps, on the higher terraces of the creeks and rivers, on the sand dunes, and in some areas at the foothills.

From the emplacement on diverse relief forms point of view, we can distinguish three types of settlements:

- a) Low area settlements, on the first terrace of the river in the plains, on high terraces from the vicinity of the river meadow or on the shores of the swamp and some other elevations.
- b) Settlements in the hilly area, situated whether across the large water courses and on their affluent creeks, or on the hill slopes, usually being used the south sides.
- c) Settlements in the mountainous areas or in piedmonts (relatively rare) found again in the river valleys and occupy the heights from the area.

From the ethnographic and geographic point of view we were able to distinguish two large types of settlements:

- a) Compact settlements.
- b) Open or scattered settlements.

The first category is usually placed on a well determined relief unit: hill, promontory, little dimensions terraces, hills, with small surfaces (between 1 ha or less and 2 ha). In the case of the second category, the settlements are found in open areas, wide, especially in the plains, with large surfaces, most of the times (larger than 2 ha).

The dwellings

Based on Z. Maxim and C. Vriag's research, the dwellings are divided in three types⁴⁶

For the advanced Neolithic the dwelling types are divided as follows:

1. Surface dwellings:
 - a) Simple, characterized by wattle and daub agglomerations, ceramic fragments, with stone tools, and animal bones.
 - b) With an adobe platform under which a tapped layer of gravel is found (this particular type of dwellings has not been found in this very group).

⁴⁵Bogdan 1957, 108; Virag 2004-2005, 15

⁴⁶Maxim 1999, 56; Virag 2004, 15-16

- c) With an adobe platform placed on a layer of thick and split beams (i.e. the so called dwellings with a suspension floor; this kind of dwelling has been found in this group).
- 2. Hovel or hut type dwellings.
- 3. Half hovel or half hut type dwellings.
- 4. Shack type dwellings (seasonal housing, we do not have such discoveries).

The surface dwellings have been made of wood and clay. The usage of wood in the dwelling's structure was reduced to a minimum level required for the construction with twig braids tapped with argil or only with clay mixed with straws, chaff, etc. Generally, the annex buildings (stables, warehouses) were bonded to the dwelling's wall from practical reasons thus in the winter the dwellings lost fewer heat. The roof of the house was generally built in two or four angled system made of straws, reed, cane, and they were short being less exposed to the west winds that dominate in the area. The houses were generally southwards oriented, because they had little sun light and little heat, the porch or the veranda from the entrance was the place where the household activities were carried out⁴⁷. This type of dwelling also appears in the Criş/Körös⁴⁸ culture.

Such dwellings have also been discovered at Moftinu Mic-Pescărie B⁴⁹, Căpleni-Canton CFR⁵⁰, Căpleni⁵¹, Füzesabony-Gubakút⁵², Mezőkövesd-Mocsolyás⁵³.

The pits

The pits are considered closed complexes that offer the researchers, beside a rich archaeological material, an important amount of data about the habitat of a site. They have not always received the deserved attention from the researchers. Generally, the existence of this type of complex is only signaled, in the same time with the description of the settlements, without insisting over the type, shape, dimensions, destination and above all the content⁵⁴ of it.

Based on the results from the Căpleni-Canalul de irigații excavations, N. Iercoşan has established three types of pits according to their shape and dimensions⁵⁵:

- 1. Large size pits with two variants:
 - a) Almost straight (flat) bottom pits with a length of 4-6 m, a width of 2-3 m and depths of 1.5-1.6 m, of regular shape which deepens in a straight or a little oblique way.

⁴⁷Maxim 1999, 56; Virag 2004-2005, 15-16; Domboróczki 2006, 476; Kalicz Koós 2014, 9-10

⁴⁸Lazarovici, Maxim 1995, 63-64; Maxim 1999, 58-60; Lazarovici, Lazarovici 2006.; Trogmeyer 1966, 235-240; Selmeçi 1969, 17-22; Tringham 1971, 84-87, 118, Fig. 14, c-d; Raczky 1976, 171, 1-2; 1978, 5-7; 1980, 5; Domboróczki 2005, 11

⁴⁹Németi 1986-87b, 103

⁵⁰Németi 1986-87a, 24-26

⁵¹Iercoşan 1992-1993, 14

⁵²Domboróczki 1997, 162-164; 2001, 193-214; 2006, 475-485; 2009, 75-128

⁵³Kalicz, Koós 1997, 16-33, 164-168; 2000, 45-76; 2014, 9-15

⁵⁴Iercoşan 2002, 120

⁵⁵Iercoşan 1992-1993, 9-11

- b) Pits that are carved in stairs of irregular shapes, that have a threshold of 1.2-1.5 m in the middle and larger dimensions (7.3-7.6 m in length, 5-6 m in width, and a depth of over 2.2 m).
2. Middle size pits with a flat bottom or just a little hollowed in the middle with a length of 2.5-3.5 m, a width of 1.5-2 m and a depth of 0.5-1.2 m.
3. Large size pits of cylindrical shape with a diameter of 1 m and a depth of 1.5 m.

For a long time in the settlements research of the Neolithic, the specialists focused mainly on excavating and describing the pits- being one of a kind complexes- which were also caused by the systematical excavation, that were carried out on a smaller surface or they were only rescue or salvage excavation through which only a few segments of a settlement⁵⁶ became known. Thereby, in the specialty literature an opinion was widely spread, an opinion that stated that settlements of the Linear Ceramic culture bearers of the Alföld type (ALP, AVK) and those of the other groups from this culture (ALPI- Szatmár) or the related groups from the neighboring territories (Pişcolt), were situated on a small surface, with an irregular or circular⁵⁷ territorial shape. During these excavations a series of pits of different dimensions were discovered, some of them with stairs and fragmentary deposits of wattle and daub or hearth⁵⁸, thus considered as pits for hut or half hut⁵⁹ type dwellings, which were well known since the early Neolithic⁶⁰. Not even after the first discoveries of the surface dwellings with walls made of twig braids tapped with argil or only with clay, discovered in several settlements⁶¹, the researchers have not taken into consideration studying these constructions. Due to the increase of the excavation that started in the middle of the '90s of the past century in the case of highways and rapid roads construction, this matter⁶² became a priority of the Hungarian researchers. In 1994, at the work that was carried out on the M3 highway, the first evidence of a surface dwelling appeared, at the settlement of Mezökövesd-Mocsolyás⁶³, and later similar dwellings were discovered at Füzesabony-Gubakút in 1995⁶⁴.

Chapter VI. Material culture

The main category of material culture is the ceramics, to which seven large types with several sub forms for each of them, with different evolutionary phases for every phase of evolution, were established. Some ceramic shapes are present in the entire evolutionary process of the cultural group, and some others are present in phase I, II, sau III.

The ornamentation of the ceramics is divided in two types: unpainted ornaments and painted ornaments. The most spread type in the entire process of evolution is represented by a

⁵⁶Kalicz, Makkay 1977, 72-73; Korek 1977, 3-17; 1983, 24-25; Makkay 1982, 160-161; Kurucz 1989, 20-25

⁵⁷Makkay 1982 160, Horváth 1989, 87

⁵⁸Lazarovici, Némethi 1983, 22-23

⁵⁹Domboróczki 2009, 78

⁶⁰Maxim 1999, 56

⁶¹Trogmeyer 1966, 235-240; Selmeçi 1969, 17-22; Tringham 1971, 84-87, 118, Fig. 14, c-d; Raczky 1976, 171, 1-2; 1983, 18; 1983 5-10

⁶²Kalicz, Koós 2014, 10

⁶³Kalicz, Koós 1997a, 133; 1997b, 28-33; 47; 2002, 46

⁶⁴Domboróczki 2006, 475-476; 2009, 78, Fig.3

painted ornamentation with certain motives that vary, from simple forms or motives to combined or complicated geometrical motives. The unpainted ornaments are done by nail, finger or with the help of some objects (wood, bone), and the ones painted with birch tar were directly painted on the surface of the pot or on the surface of a slipe.

Other clay objects appear as well: loom weights/pintaderas, spoons, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic idols (centaur) and four legged altars. Other categories of objects contain stone tools, polished stone axes with or without a shaft hole, grinders. The Spondylus adornment are also characteristic, clay or marble beads, clay bracelets, these objects being present especially in tombs.

Afterwards we have the objects made from antler and bone, here we can mention the hammer axes made of stag antler, awls, piercing objects, needles, and of course the clay spoons, that were used for polishing the surface of the pots or for the ochre smashing.

Chapter VII. Graves

In the north western part of the country and in the surrounding territories we have only a few mortuary discoveries from the Neolithic age and even fewer from the Middle/Advanced Neolithic age in which the Pişcolt culture and the Szatmár group can be enclosed. Unfortunately, in the actual stage of the research, we do not hold any kind of data about the mortuary discoveries from the sub-Carpathian Ukraine or from the eastern part of Slovakia. The most important sites, however, where such discoveries have been made, are at Mezőkövesd-Mocsolyás (25 tombs)⁶⁵, Füzesabony-Gubakút (13 tombs)⁶⁶, Tiszalúc-Sarkad (9 tombs)⁶⁷ from Hungary, while from the north western part of Romania, at Andrid-Pășune (4 tombs)⁶⁸, Urziceni-Vamă (3 tombs)⁶⁹, Porț-Corău (2 tombs)⁷⁰, Săcueini-Horo (1 tomb)⁷¹.

In the Neolithic age, according to the archaeological research, there were no properly tombs with a separate location from the settlement. In this period the tombs in the majority of the cases were located in the settlement, nearby the dwellings or in the dwellings. Even if the tombs were located in the settlement, we can still set bounds to a certain area from the settlement's territory, at Mezőkövesd-Mocsolyás, where the „grave yard” was located in a region unsued for dwelling construction⁷².

The specific funeral rite is a burial one, where the deceased are found in a crouched position on the left side, with their hands upon their faces; while the right sided position was

⁶⁵25 tombs were discovered, inside 28 individuals were indetified. In the settlement human bones were also discvovered, but in the dwellings, in the household pits. Thereby from this site alone we have 34 individuals (inf. Zs. Zoffmann).

⁶⁶Whittle et ali. 2013, 65-70.

⁶⁷Oravec 1996, 51-63.

⁶⁸Németi 1999, 29; Astaloş, Virag 2006-2007, 73.

⁶⁹Gindele et. al. 2004, 356-58; Virag 2004a, 41-76; Astaloş, Virag 2006-2007, 80.

⁷⁰Matei et ali 2003, p. 246-248; Lazarovici et ali 2003, p. 305-309;

Băcuet-Crişan 2004, 73.

⁷¹Comşa, Nánási 1971, 633-636.

⁷²Kalicz, Koós, 2000a, 50.

very rarely encountered. In the majority of the mortuary complexes there was found only one deceased person, but we have several tombs in Mezőkövesd-Mocsolyás⁷³, where in a single tomb several individuals were found, and in most cases, the adults were with the children, together. In what concerns the orientation of the tombs, we must confess that they are rather varied: E-W, S-N, W-E, SE-NW, NW-SE, NE-SW, SSW- NNE, SSE-NNW, ESE-WNW, out of which, the majority are oriented towards SE-NW.

Most of the discovered tombs are without inventory objects. From the funeral inventory point of view, the ceramic is the most spread category of items of this period, they were found in tombs that belonged to both men and women, but we also have discoveries of other objects such as: ochre, stone or bone tools, obsidian blades. The beads, the bracelets and the amulets are not considered objects of the funeral inventory but instead, elements of clothing⁷⁴.

Objects very often encountered are: beads or Spondylus bracelets, these objects appear in the tombs from Mezőkövesd-Mocsolyás, Füzesabony-Gubakút sau Tiszalúc-Sarkad⁷⁵.

From the scientific specialty articles we have anthropological data regarding the population from the Middle Neolithic age that populated this area in the time period mentioned earlier. Thereby, in the early phase, in the Middle Neolithic, the ALP culture bearers and those of the Szatmár group, represented a heterogenous population, of stout stature, tall and probably with Mesolithic origins⁷⁶.

A more complex anthropological analysis, with the help of some modern methods, was made in the case of three large “tombs” discovered at Tiszalúc-Sarkad,⁷⁷ Mezőkövesd-Mocsolyás, Füzesabony-Gubakút and Polgár-Ferenci hát⁷⁸, in the rest of the cases the number of the tombs was rather small in order to carry out an analysis, or they were simply irrelevant to be used in statistics.

Chapter VIII. The absolute and relative chronology

The Neolithization of the north western part of the country was accomplished in the end of the early Neolithic in the Starčevo-Criș IVA/IVB culture, present with over 30 settlements in the north western part of Romania and which according to the spreading maps of this phase⁷⁹, enters in this area from Sălaj, through Valea Bereteului-Valea Ierului and

⁷³ Kalicz, Koós 2000a; Zoffman 2014, 297-307.

⁷⁴ Kalicz, Koós 2000a, 51.

⁷⁵ Hágó 2014, 28-29.

⁷⁶ Zoffmann 1996, 63-57.

⁷⁷ Zoffmann 1996, 63-57.

⁷⁸ Whittle et al. 2013, 59-87.

⁷⁹ Luca et al. 2010, fig. 14.

Valea Crasna, period in which the elements of polychromy⁸⁰ are still to be found. These communities arrive in the area during the third wave of the Neolithic⁸¹ migration.

Due to the research from a geographical area which is considered relatively large, in the north western part of the country, in the Middle and Upper Tisa River zone, we can state that the early settlements from the Pişcolt group are contemporary with the Szatmár group (ex Szatmár II), settlements that are already present at the level of the Criş IVA/IVB in the same place⁸².

In the Romanian research field, besides the influences that came from the late phase of the Criş culture, there are also some other elements that are considered the base of the relative chronology of the Pişcolt group. Besides the SC elements and the balcano-anatoliene (polychromy) influences, a vital role was played by the linear elements and of course the Vinča Culture ones, phase A2⁸³.

Besides the ceramic material that was discovered in the Pişcolt I, or Szatmár type settlements, we have to mention other two clay objects: figurines with a triangular head, which are also present in the Vinča environment from Banat or in the southern part of the Danube River⁸⁴, and objects of clay, ornamented with different incisions whose functions were probably related to the spiritual life⁸⁵. Moreover, the occurrence of the so-called *bone spoon* has to be mentioned, here in this chapter, this spoon being present in several settlements from the geographical area in discussion, has its origin in the Vinča⁸⁶ culture.

From the studies that debate the absolute chronology of the advanced Neolithic, in central and south eastern part of Europe and the Balkan-Anatolian territories, we should mention W. Schier's⁸⁷ and R. Gläser's⁸⁸ studies, about the absolute and relative chronology of the Vinča culture, C.M. Mantru's study on the Mesolithic and Neolithic from Romania⁸⁹, C.I. Suciu's study for Romania and the surrounding areas⁹⁰ or the results of certain national or international⁹¹ projects and of the cultures from the north eastern part of Hungary⁹² or the Upper Tisa River zone⁹³.

⁸⁰ Némethi 1999, 119; Lazarovici, Lazarovici, 2006, 441.

⁸¹ Lazarovici 1979, 64; Luca, Suciu 2007, 77-87; Suciu 2009, 34-35.

⁸² Lazarovici, Lazarovici 2006, 441-442, Fig. III f 1; Domboróczki 2010, 137-177.

⁸³ Lazarovici 2009, 442-443; Băcuet 2008b, 44; Suciu 2009, 168.

⁸⁴ Lazarovici 1977, Pl. LXV/7; 1979, Fig. 7/2; 1985, Fig. 2/7; Draşovean 1990 Pl. IV/10; Draşovean 1996, Pl. XXVIII/1, 2, 10, 11; Gimbutas 1991, Fig. 8-14; Karmanski 1977 T. VI/1 a,b; Lazarovici 1973, Fig. 21/14, 1979 Fig. 7/1, 5-14, Fig. 8; 1985, Fig. 2/8; T. XIV/1 a, T. XVI/2 a; Monah 1991, Fig. 2/10; Quitaa 1960, Abb. 16 k.

⁸⁵ Racky 1988; 1989, 233-251; 1989, 237; 1992, 152; Kalicz, Koós 2014, Fig. 27.

⁸⁶ Kalicz, Koós 2014, 55-58.

⁸⁷ Schier 1996, 141-162.

⁸⁸ Gläser 1996, 175-212.

⁸⁹ Mantu 1998, 83-100.

⁹⁰ Suciu 2009, Anexa 1, 283-298.

⁹¹ Luca et al. 2006, 215-228; 2010, 103-118; Hinz et al. 2012, 1-4.

⁹² Domboróczki 2003, 5-71.

⁹³ Horváth, Hertelendi 1994, 111-133.

The first C14 data from the early Neolithic gathered from the territories of our country has its origin in the first phase of the Criș culture (6100/6000-5900/5800 BC) from the following settlements: Gura Baciului, Ocna Sibiului, Miercurea Sibiului, Seușa from Transilvania and Foieni-Sălaș in Banat; the totality of the data being estimated before 6000 BC⁹⁴. These pieces of information match almost entirely with the data recently gathered (6200 BC) from the animal bone analysis discovered in the settlement of Starčevo at Lower Danube (Donja-Branjevina, Topole Bač), or with earlier ones from the Neolithic settlements from the Mureș area (Pitvaros, Deszk, Maroslele) around 6000 BC⁹⁵. Thereby, the Neolithic settlements come from the Balkans, they enter the Carpathian Basin on the Lower Danube line (Starčevo culture), the Mureș area (Criș/Körös culture), the Méhtelek zone (5770-5650)⁹⁶, in the Upper Tisa zone at Ibrány-Nagyerdő (5620-5470)⁹⁷; data that are similar for the period of Criș IVA-B in the north western Romania⁹⁸ or from the southern part of Slovakia (Eastern Slovakian Lowland –ESL)⁹⁹.

In what concerns the absolute chronology, the data from the Vinča culture sketch horizons that stretch in time for a period of almost 700 years BP. Regarding the emergence of the Vinča culture in Transilvania, we have more recent C14 data, that shows phases A2-A3 as being present at Miercurea Sibiului-Pietriș, which date the levels IIa1 and IIa2 at less time after 6500 BP¹⁰⁰, similar data we also have from other sites from the same chronological horizon¹⁰¹.

C14 data that refer to Oltenia from the Dudești culture, still of southern origin from the Cârcea-Viaduct, is placed as a time reference between 5500-5000 BC, contemporary with the level of Vinča B¹⁰² or Vinča B1, B1/B2- B2¹⁰³, and the data from Dudești Vinča C from the same settlement falls, as a time reference, between 4940-4700 BC, almost matching the levels of Vinča C from Hodoni, from Banat 4890-4720 BC or the one that was recently stated regarding the evolution of phase Vinča C in the former Yugoslavia, at 4980-4715 BC¹⁰⁴.

New data regarding the absolute chronology was recently introduced in the specialty literature, through the stratigraphy analysis and through C14 dating of the strata from Zau; the obtained data comparing with the Starčevo-Criș, Vinča, Lumea Nouă cultures and the Pișcolt¹⁰⁵ cultural group.

Zau IA-Zau IB - Vinča A2 – SCIVA - Lumea Nouă Ia - Pișcolt IA (5320 – 5200 BC).

Zau IC - Vinča A3 – SCIVB - Lumea Nouă Ib - Pișcolt IB (5250-5050 BC).

⁹⁴Luca et al. 2010, 108, Fig. 6.

⁹⁵Raczky, Domboróczky 2010, 214.

⁹⁶Whittle et al. 2013, 107-110; Lazarovici 2006, 116-117; Kalicz 2011, 44.

⁹⁷Domboróczky 2010, 137-138, Fig. 11; Raczky, Domboróczky 2010, 214.

⁹⁸Luca et al. 2010, 114.

⁹⁹Kozłowski, Nowak 2010, 79.

¹⁰⁰Suciu 2009, 165. Fig. 18, 255

¹⁰¹Suciu 2009, Anexa I. 283-298, Mantu Tabel I. 97-98.

¹⁰²Mantu 1998, 85;

¹⁰³Lazarovici 2010, 61.

¹⁰⁴Mantu 1998, 86, nota 18.

¹⁰⁵Lazarovici 2010, 55-71.

Zau IIA - Vinča B1 - Lumea Nouă IIA - Pișcolt IIA (5150-5050 BC).

Zau IIB-IIC - VinčaB1/B2-B2 - Lumea Nouă IIB - Pișcolt IIB (5050-5000; 5000-4950 BC).

Zau IIIA - Vinča C1-Turdaș I - Herpály I. XII-IX - Lumea Nouă IIC/IIIA - Pișcolt IIIA (5070-4930 BC).

Zau IIIB - Vinča C2 – Turdaș II – Lumea Nouă IIIA – Pișcolt IIIB (5030-4840 BC).¹⁰⁶

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