

The Middle Bronze Age in the Banat. Old Controversies on the Vatina Culture*

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Abstract: Nearly 20 years ago I presented a brief historiographical overview of the so-called Vatina culture. Being published in Romanian, the article had a limited distribution. My concluding remarks on the so-called Corneşti-Crvenka group were the only ones noticed, probably because they were included in the English summary. Now I found it useful to publish in English this historiographical work concerning the Vatina culture, because it is still relevant today and can be the basis for future discussions concerning the Middle Bronze Age in the historical Banat.

Keywords: Banat region, Middle Bronze Age, Vatina culture, historiographical overview

Rezumat: Cu aproape 20 de ani în urmă prezintam o schiță istoriografică privind aşa numita cultură Vatina. Fiind publicat în limba română, articolul a avut o circulație restrânsă. Au fost remarcate doar concluziile mele referitoare la aşa numitul grup Corneşti-Crvenka, care se regăseau în rezumatul în limba engleză. Am considerat utilă publicarea în limba engleză a acestui demers istoriografic privind cultura Vatina, care este încă actual, pe care se pot clădi viitoare discuții privind bronzul mijlociu în Banatul istoric.

Cuvinte-cheie: Banat, bronz mijlociu, cultura Vatina, perspectivă istoriografică

* This article has been completed during my Alexander von Humboldt scholarship at the Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Prähistorische Archäologie, under the supervision of the late Professor B. Hänsel (2000-2001). I must once again express my thanks to colleagues T. Soroceanu, N. Boroffka, V. Sava, A. Stavilă, L. Ruscu and G. Florea for their helpful comments on this study.

Almost 20 years ago I presented a historiographical overview of the so-called Vatina culture¹. The article, being published in Romanian, had limited circulation. Only my conclusions concerning the so-called Cornești-Crvenka group, included in the English abstract, have been remarked². Those who are interested in the Vatina culture cannot use C. Ihde's PhD thesis because it remains unpublished³. Another history of research was published in Hungarian by K. P. Fischl and V. Kiss⁴. M. Ljuština's recent synthesis of this archaeological phenomenon can only be read by those who know Serbian⁵. For that reason, I found it useful to publish in English this historiographical approach on the Vatina culture, which I believe it is still relevant today, on which future debates on the Middle Bronze Age in the historical Banat can be built.

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When I started investigating the Bronze Age in the Banat, I was surprised by the fact that for the same artifacts there are different chronological classifications and cultural designations in the literature. In 1992, at a symposium gathering archaeologists from the Romanian Banat organized by F. Medeleț in Buziaș, becoming familiar with the older⁶ and newer⁷ scientific contributions of Serbian colleagues and processing a good

¹ Gogâltan 2004.

² See especially the citations made by M. Ljuština (Ljuština 2012; Ljuština 2013; Ljuština 2014; Ljuština 2015; Ljuština 2019; Ljuština 2022) or more recently Molloy et al. 2023.

³ Ihde 2001a; Ihde 2001b.

⁴ Fischl, Kiss 2002, 125-129.

⁵ Ljuština 2022.

⁶ The general former Yugoslavian literature consulted for this issue is: Vulić, Grbić 1937, Pl. 19-27; Grbić 1939, 57-58; Mano-Zisi et al. 1948; M. Garašanin, D. Garašanin 1951, 64-105; Gavela 1952a, 24-26; Gavela 1952b, 53, Fig. 6; Grbić 1953; Rašajski, Šulman 1953; Gavela 1953, 60-66, Tab. I, III; M. Garašanin 1954; D. Garašanin 1954b; Gavela 1955; Grbić 1956, 19-27; Grbić 1958; M. Garašanin 1959, 75-82; Trbuhović 1961; Jovanović 1961; Tasić 1961; Tasić 1962; Jovanović 1963, 21-26; Medović 1963; Tasić 1963; Tasić 1964; Medović 1964, 30; Gavela 1964, 44, Tab. X-XI; Tasić 1967a; Trbuhović 1968a; Trbuhović 1968b, 62-69; Gavela 1971, 200; Tasić 1972; Kolarić 1972; D. Garašanin 1972; M. Garašanin 1973, 319-352; Tasić 1973, 22-37; Tasić 1974a, 212-224; Tasić 1974b; Uzelac 1975; Tasić 1976, 11; Tasić 1977; Balen-Letunić 1978, 104-108; Jevtić 1981, 31, Tab. IV-VI; Tasić 1981; Tasić 1982; M. Garašanin 1983, 504-519; Tasić 1983, 58-75; Majnarić-Pandžić 1984; Tasić 1984c; Tasić 1984e; Zotović 1985, 35-48; Bogdanović 1986; Vukmanović, Popović 1986; Stojić 1986, 148, Fig. 26-32; Petrović 1986; Gaćić 1987; Tasić 1988b, 64-70; Tasić 1989; Tasić 1991.

⁷ Among the publications on the Vatina culture after 1992, I would mention the following: Stojić 1992, 217-218; Majnarić-Pandžić 1994, 66-70; Stojić 1995, 21-22; Uzelac 1996; Grčki-Stanimirov 1996, 75-76; Bogdanović 1996; Stojić 1996, 249-251; Jevtić, Vukmanović 1996; Medović 1996b; Stojić, Nikitović 1996, 207-212; Tasić 1997a, 82-83; Tasić 1997b, 49-51; Stojić 1997; Srejović, Lazić 1997, 233-247; Uzelac et al. 1997; Majnarić-Pandžić 1998, 179-181; Medović 1998b, 149-151; M. Garašanin 1998, 12-13; Tasić 1998, 34-35; Stojić 1998; Babović 2001. For investigations in and around Feudvar or for links to other cultural circles in the area see also

part of the materials from the Cornești settlement⁸, I affirmed for the first time that there cannot be a Vatina culture in the Romanian Banat⁹.

Such a remark attracted a lot of criticism from my colleagues. I tried to explain that there is no Vatina culture in the Romanian Banat as it was defined by some archaeologists from former Yugoslavia. At the same time I suggested that the presence of the Verbicioara culture in the historical Banat cannot be accepted.

A basic point that confused me from the very beginning was the fact that the emergence of the Vatina culture was placed by some Serbian colleagues in the Early Bronze Age¹⁰, while other specialists, and I mention only those from the Carpathian Basin, saw in this cultural manifestation an expression of the Middle Bronze Age¹¹.

Even if I intended to elaborate, through my PhD thesis, a synthesis of the Early and Middle Bronze Age in the Banat, because of the outbreak of the war in former Yugoslavia¹², the modest financial funds I received, but especially because of the need to have a broad discussion on the chronology of this period in south-eastern Central Europe, I had to limit my study only to chronology and metallurgy problems in the Romanian Banat and on the lower Mureș River¹³. The conclusions I reached have already been published, so there is no need to repeat them.

I consider that Middle Bronze Age period begins after 2100 BC and is marked by the development of tell settlements in the lowland area of the Banat and a flourishing bronze and gold metallurgy. The end of the Middle Bronze Age is marked by the emergence of two cultural manifestations

the literature cited below. Serbian literature was also checked with the help of colleagues Marija Ljuština and Valentin Cedica, whom I thank here again.

⁸ Radu 1972a; Radu 1972b; Soroceanu, Radu 1974; Medelet 1993, 119-122; Gogâltan 1999b, Fig. 9-11; Gogâltan 2004, Pl. III-V.

⁹ In the following I will use the cultural term "Vatina", as it has become established among specialists in Romania and beyond, with the same meaning as "Vatin" or "Vattina=Wattina=Watin" sometimes found in Serbian or German literature.

¹⁰ Grbić 1958, 38; Tasić 1967a; Tasić 1973, 25; Tasić 1974a, 207-224; Tasić 1974b, 199; Tasić 1977, 17; Tasić 1981, 205; Tasić 1983, 73-74, 152; Tasić 1984b, 12-13; Tasić 1984c, 74; Bogdanović 1986, 69-70; Tasić 1988b, 64, Fig. 3 (the second phase of the Early Bronze Age); Tasić 1989, 92; Tasić 1991, 14; Vasić 1994, 3; Tasić 1995; Uzelac 1996; Stojić 1996, 249-250, 254; Tasić 1997a, 82-83; Tasić 1997b, 49-51; Uzelac et al. 1997; Srejović, Lazić 1997, 233-247; Tasić 1998, 34-35.

¹¹ Grbić 1939, 58; Nestor 1960, 108; Berciu 1966, 176-178; Popescu 1966, 560-562; D.Garašanin 1967, 205-206; D.Garašanin 1972, 36-37; M.Garašanin 1973, 334-335; Soroceanu, Radu 1974, 33 Bóna 1975, 179-186; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1978, 83; Lazarovici 1977, 90-93; Morintz 1978, 17-22; Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, 76-81; Dumitrescu et al. 1983, 192-193; M.Garašanin 1983, 506; Majnarić-Pandžić 1984; Zotović 1985, 46-48; Dumitrescu, Vulpe 1988, 67; Soroceanu 1991, 77-78, 120-121; Bóna 1992, 32; Majnarić-Pandžić 1994, 66-70; Gumičák 1997, 42-54; etc.

¹² The invitation made in the summer of 1991 by Professor B. Hänsel to participate in the entire research campaign at Feudvar could not be complied with.

¹³ Gogâltan 1999a.

whose origins can be found to the west of my area of interest: the Crucenî-Belegiș culture situated in the central area of the Romanian Banat and the *Hügelgräberkultur* on the lower Mureș River. The phenomenon takes place some time before 1500 BC and is associated with the end of tell settlements and the emergence of the urnfield graves in the Banat plain. I consider that the Late Bronze Age begins in the Banat along with the emergence of the two already mentioned cultures. Considering the Central European chronology, the Middle Bronze in the area covers the period from the end of stage A1 - up to and including stage B1¹⁴ (Fig. 1).

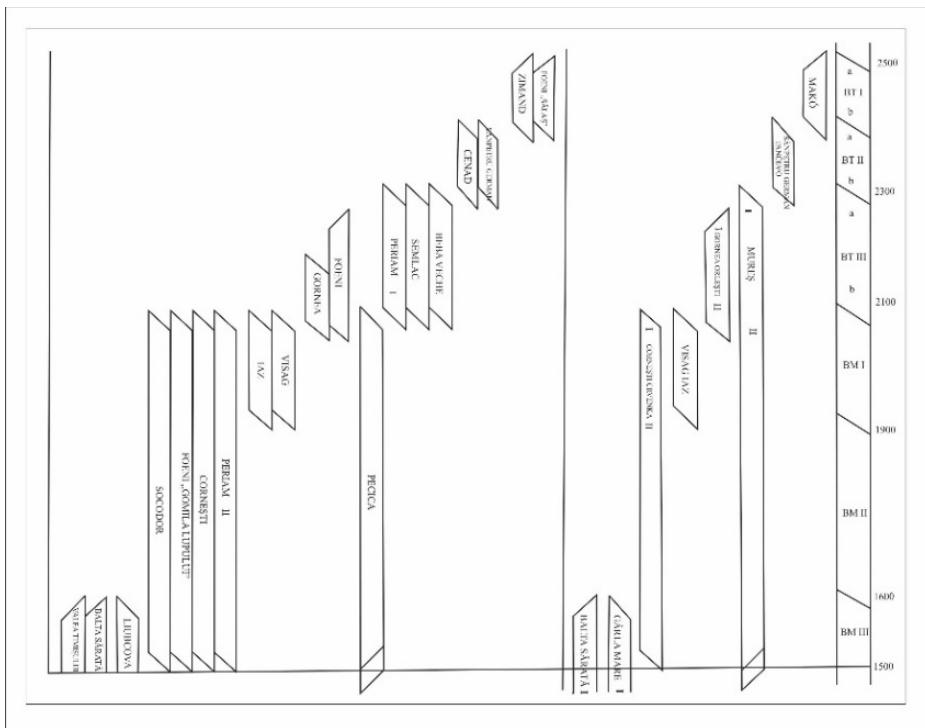


Fig. 1. The Early and the Middle Bronze Age of the Romanian Banat.
The chronological and cultural evolution.

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In the following, discussing terminology issues, I will focus on the most important moments that led to the identification of the cultural realities belonging to the Middle Bronze Age in the Banat, specifying my position towards them.

¹⁴ Gogâltan 1998a, 197-200; Gogâltan 1999a, 205-209; Gogâltan 2001, 292-293 ; Gogâltan 2004, Fig. 1.

The first step is marked by the work of B. Milleker¹⁵. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the following one he discovered at Vatin (Vatina, Vattina) a series of artifacts of great importance for the prehistory of the Banat¹⁶. Until now specialists from the former Yugoslavia and Romania have avoided a thorough analysis of them. This is due both to the fact that they were relatively different from what was published from other sites in 1937 by N. Vulić and M. Grbić¹⁷, and to the unsystematic and non-stratigraphic nature of the excavations, as the archaeological material discovered could only be used from a typological point of view¹⁸.

Things became clearer with N. Tasić's outlining of the characteristics of the urnfield graves¹⁹. In my opinion, and not only mine, I consider that in the eponymous settlement of the Vatina culture there is a lot of material coming from a settlement, with slightly different pottery from what was known before the Second World War from Pančevo²⁰, Omoljca²¹, Čoka²², Ljuljaci²³ or Vinča²⁴ and different assemblage constituting the inventory of a necropolis or necropolises²⁵. It is certainly a Cruceni-Belegiš necropolis (with numerous imports of the Dubovac-Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare culture), composed of about 400 cremation graves in urns²⁶. At least one burial grave²⁷ can be added, whose ritual and funerary inventory link it to the manifestations of the *Hügelgräberkultur* of Bačka²⁸, the south-eastern Alföld²⁹ and the lower Mureş valley³⁰. It should be noted that the finds made by B. Milleker

¹⁵ Scherer 1983.

¹⁶ Milleker 1894; Milleker 1896a; Milleker 1897a, 122-144; Milleker 1897b, 52-62; Milleker 1899; Milleker 1902; Milleker 1903; Milleker 1905; Milleker 1906, 181; Milleker 1907, 93; Milleker 1908, 187-188; Milleker 1909, 382.

¹⁷ Vulić, Grbić 1937, Pl. 19-27.

¹⁸ M. Garašanin 1973, 319.

¹⁹ Tasić 1964; Tasić 1967b.

²⁰ Milleker 1925, 6 "Bachmanischen Ziegeli"; Vulić, Grbić 1937, Pl. 24-27; Grbić 1939, Tab. III/8-10, 13.

²¹ Vulić, Grbić 1937, Pl. 20-22; 23/1-8; Grbić 1939, Tab. III/7, 11-12.

²² Vulić, Grbić 1937, Pl. 19/11.

²³ Vulić, Grbić 1937, Pl. 23/9-14.

²⁴ Vasić 1936a, 135, Tab. LXXVII/290-291; Vasić 1936b, Tab. LXXIV/228-229; LXXV-LXXVI/233-236; Vulić, Grbić 1937, Pl. 19/4-10.

²⁵ Tasić 1974a, 213; Tasić 1977, 17; Tasić 1984c, 62, 68.

²⁶ Milleker 1905, 60-67, Pl. XIV, XV/1a-b, 3, XVI/5, XVIII/2, etc. Hänsel 1968, 239 (Vatina group); M. Garašanin 1973, 321-322 (Vatina group); Tasić 1983, 88-99 (Belegiš culture).

²⁷ Milleker 1894, 3-4; Milleker 1897a, 122-123; Milleker 1905, 12-13, 63, Pl. I.

²⁸ Trogmayer, Szekeres 1968; Tasić 1972.

²⁹ Foltiny 1957; Trogmayer 1975.

³⁰ Gogáltań 1999a, 210, n. 127 with the bibliography.

have led Bronze Age researchers to use the term *Vatina culture/group/type* in the literature³¹.

M. Grbić, in his *Prehistory of Vojvodina*, discusses three cultures in the Bronze Age: Mokrin, Vatin and Vršac³². He thus made a distinction between the finds from Vatin and Vršac. Without giving too many details, Grbić placed discoveries such as those at Pančevo and Omoljca in the Vatin culture, and discoveries near Vršac in a culture with the same name³³. In the 1950s, his articles covered the whole issue of the Vatina culture: origin, area, chronology³⁴. On the basis of the results of the new investigations at Ilandža³⁵, he revives the earlier idea of the existence of two consecutive groups Vatina and Vršac, the former characterized by the finds from Pančevo and Omoljca, and the latter by the use of white encrusted vessels³⁶. Considering that the area of distribution of the Vatina culture included the Banat, part of Serbia, Slavonia and Bosnia, Grbić came to the conclusion that this manifestation of the Early Bronze Age is not a "Pannonian" culture, but an Illyrian one. Its origin must therefore be sought in the Balkans (Armenochori horizon) and not in the Middle Danube area³⁷. As we shall see below, some of these theories can still be supported today. Grbić's separation of the artifacts from the Pančevo and Omoljca settlements from those of the encrusted pottery necropolis also remains important.

In over 50 years of investigating ancient history, M. Garašanin has not been able to avoid tackling one of the most spectacular European

³¹ I mention only specialists up to the beginning of the Second World War: Miske 1909, 135-136, 143-144; Miske 1910, 150 ("versecz-vattinai"); Borovszky 1911, 304; Franz 1922, 98 ("Wattina-Kultur"); Schmidt 1924, 88 ("Vattina Kultur"); Childe 1929, 287-290 ("The Vattina Culture"); Dunăreanu-Vulpe 1930, 22-26; Nestor 1933, 100 ("Vattina-Vârșeț-Gruppe"), 102-103 ("Vattina-Gruppe"), 110 ("Die späte Vattina Kultur"); Tompa 1937, 83 ("Vattinaer Typ"); Holste 1939, 5, 20 ("Vattina-Art"). In his famous, at the time, summary of prehistoric art in Europe, M. Hoernes placed the finds from Vatin and Vršac in a so-called "Pannonian" pottery group of the Bronze Age (Hoernes, Menghin 1925, 404-412), probably influenced by M. Wosinsky (Wosinsky 1904, 63-65, Pl. LXXXI-LXXXIX). O. Menghin discusses a "Werschetzer Kultur" (Hoernes, Menghin 1925, 825-826). Later O. Menghin used this term for the settlements and necropolises of Vatin, Vršac, Tolvădia (today Livezile), Dubovac, Satu Mare etc. (Menghin 1928, 27). After WW II, it is surprising that V. Trbušović, in his doctoral thesis published in 1968, still uses the term "Vojvođansko-panonska grupa" for these findings (Trbušović 1968b, 62-69)!

³² Grbić 1939, 56-58.

³³ Grbić 1939, Tab. III/7-13 (Vatina culture) and Tab. III/14-16 (Vršac culture).

³⁴ Grbić 1953; Grbić 1956, 19-23; Grbić 1958.

³⁵ Marijanski 1957.

³⁶ Grbić 1953.

³⁷ Grbić 1958, 37-38.

civilizations of the Bronze Age: the Vatina culture³⁸. Discussing the chronology of the Bronze Age in the Banat, Garašanin established two stages of development for the Vatina culture: an earlier one called Pančevo-Omoljca and a later one called Vatin-Vršac³⁹. This inner chronology is used to this day by some colleagues in Serbia. Through the publications of B. Milleker from Vatin, the culture also includes material that would later be defined as the Cruceni-Belegiš culture⁴⁰. They will be classified in a "late phase" of the Vatina culture⁴¹, later called "Belegiš-Ilandža"⁴². At the same time, M. Garašanin is the first to mention a local group (phase) of the Vatina culture in western Serbia based on finds from Ljuljaci - in the Belotić - Bela Crkva and Dobrača area⁴³. It should be noted that the settlements at Foeni and Cornești in the Romanian Banat are included among the manifestations of the Vatina culture⁴⁴.

When we refer to what M. Garašanin wrote about the Vatina culture, we must take into account the state of research at the time. Today it is clear that the Banat and Srem urnfield graves belong to another cultural phenomenon: Cruceni-Belegiš. Moreover, even M. Garašanin has given up these old opinions, accepting the results of new research⁴⁵. As will be seen later on, I am inclined to believe that the two evolutionary phases of the Vatina culture, proposed by M. Garašanin in 1954, are in fact regional developments of the same civilization. As for accepting the existence of a western variant of the Vatina culture, as defined by M. Garašanin, N. Tasić⁴⁶ or M. Bogdanović⁴⁷, I express strong reservations. Obviously these "Dobrača-type" materials cannot be neglected. In addition to the older finds mentioned above, I would add those published by M. Zotović from the Jančići, Krstac and Kriva Reka burial mounds⁴⁸, or the Lugovi-Bent

³⁸ M.Garašanin, D.Garašanin 1951, 64-105; M.Garašanin 1954; M.Garašanin 1959, 75-82; M.Garašanin 1973, 319-336, 353, 392; M.Garašanin 1983.

³⁹ M.Garašanin 1954, 59-61.

⁴⁰ M.Garašanin 1959, 77, 79, Pl. 16/4; M.Garašanin 1973, 321-336, Tab. 59. In the same way it also discusses in Alexander 1972, 71, 78-79.

⁴¹ M.Garašanin 1973, 324.

⁴² M.Garašanin 1983, 506-507.

⁴³ M.Garašanin 1959, 95103; M.Garašanin 1973, 320-321, 359-361. For materials from Bela Crkva and Dobrača see: D.Garašanin 1954b; M.Garašanin, D.Garašanin 1956, 11-12, Fig. 5-8. Further Zotović 1985, 35-48, with the resumption of the discussion.

⁴⁴ M.Garašanin 1983, 511. It is about the Foeni "Gomila lupului" site, some material from here ending up in the museum in Zrenjanin (Marinković 1996: Verbicioara culture - Tab. I, Sl. 1-2, 4; but also Vatina culture: Sl. 3, 5).

⁴⁵ M.Garašanin 1998, 12-13.

⁴⁶ Tasić 1977, 24; Tasić 1981, 201.

⁴⁷ Bogdanović 1996, 97.

⁴⁸ Zotović 1985, 39, 44, T. VII/3-5.

necropolis in Mojsinje⁴⁹. All these discoveries are enlightening in the shaping of a self-contained cultural reality in the late Middle Bronze Age – early Late Bronze Age period in central and western Serbia. It certainly has links with the Vatina world, but the investigation of necropolises alone cannot give us a complete picture of this manifestation.

D. Garašanin will accept the scenario advanced by M. Garašanin for the internal evolution and general chronology of Vatina culture⁵⁰.

Another important moment in shaping the notion of the Vatina culture was marked by the work of N. Tasić⁵¹. In publishing a series of artifacts from the Serbian Banat, N. Tasić distinguished between some sites belonging to the Vatina culture and others characteristic of the Verbicioara culture⁵². This distinction, at the time, seemed evident and was accepted by the vast majority of specialists in former Yugoslavia⁵³. Sites such as Vršac "Crvenka", Cornești, Vršac "Ludoš", Lepen, etc., were considered to belong to the Verbicioara Culture⁵⁴. The demarcation line between the two cultures was established on the alignment of the Vatin-Vršac-Židovar settlements⁵⁵. Such a cultural classification was based on the fact that there were pottery materials, especially around Vršac, slightly different from those found in southern Serbian Banat (Omoljica "Zlatica"⁵⁶, Pančevo "Donje Varoška/Najeva ciglana – Tamiška Industrija cigle i crepa"⁵⁷, Židovar near Orešac⁵⁸, etc.), in the south of Bačka (Popov Salaš near Novi Sad⁵⁹, Feudvar near Mošorin⁶⁰), south of the Danube in Srem and Šumadija

⁴⁹ Nikitović et al. 1997.

⁵⁰ D. Garašanin 1972, 37.

⁵¹ Tasić 1973; Tasić 1974a, 212-224; Tasić 1977; Tasić 1981; Tasić 1982; Tasić 1983, 58-63 (151-153); Tasić 1984c; Tasić 1988b, 64-70; Tasić 1991.

⁵² Tasić 1968, 19; Tasić 1974a, 209, 457; Tasić 1983, 67-69.

⁵³ Vukmanović, Popović 1986 (Mala Vrbica "Livade"); Gačić 1987 (Barice "Bugarska Humka", Vršac "Crvenka", Vršac "At"); Uzelac 1996, Map 2; Jevtić, Vukmanović 1996, Map 1.

⁵⁴ Tasić 1984d.

⁵⁵ Tasić 1974a, T. XXI.

⁵⁶ Trbušović 1968a, 177-180, Fig. 9-11; Kolarić 1972, cat. no. 69; M. Garašanin 1973, T. 58; M. Garašanin 1983, Tab. LXVII/1-4, 6-7; Tasić 1983, Tab. IX/2.

⁵⁷ M. Garašanin, D. Garašanin 1951, 92-93, Tab. IV/b, d; Kolarić 1972, cat. no. 70, 72-73; Tasić 1982, Fig. 1/4-6; Tasić 1983, Tab. VIII/3, 5-6. On the excavations here see Mano-Zisi et al. 1948.

⁵⁸ M. Garašanin, D. Garašanin 1951, 75; Gavela 1952a, 24-26, Sl. 23/3, 5; 24 (some ceramic fragments), 26, 28-29 (some ceramic fragments); Gavela 1952b, 53, Fig. 6; Gavela 1953, 60-65, Tab. III/9-12; Gavela 1964, 44, Tab. X-XI; Gavela 1965; Gavela 1966; Gavela 1971, 200; Gavela 1972, 41, T. VI/11-14. More data at Uzelac et al. 1997.

⁵⁹ Medović 1963, 25-26, T. 3-5; Medović 1964, 30; Tasić 1965a, 52-53; Majnarić-Pandžić 1971, 15, 21, Tab. II/5; Vilotijvić 1971, 34; Balen-Letunić 1978, 100, 104-105, Tab. III/1; Tasić 1982, Fig. 1/1-3; Tasić 1983, 60-61, 64, Sl. 22, 24; Tab. VI.

⁶⁰ Rašajski, Šulman 1953, Tab. II/10; III/10. See also Medović 1998d.

(Belegiš "Šančine"⁶¹, Gomolava on the Sava near Hrtkovci⁶², Vinča near Belgrade⁶³, Gradina on the Bosut river - near Šid⁶⁴, Ljuljaci "Milića Gradina" near Kragujevac⁶⁵). These discoveries had some analogies in what D. Berciu defined, otherwise rather vaguely, in the early 1960s as the Verbicioara culture⁶⁶.

For these considerations, N. Tasić talks about of *finds of the Cornești-Crvenka type*, as a group of materials that did not belong to the Vatina culture and in which the Verbicioara elements are present⁶⁷. This group was considered as a local manifestation, an evolved aspect of the Verbicioara culture, which was placed at the end of its evolution (characteristic of the 3rd phase)⁶⁸ and strongly influenced by the "Vatina style". The finds from southern Banat could thus be described as "Verbicioara-Vatin Keramik"⁶⁹. However, what Tasić avoided taking into consideration was precisely the Vatin "Bela Bara" settlement⁷⁰. In line with N. Tasić's argument that channels, volutes, spirals and their derivatives are characteristic of the Vatina culture, and that ornaments made of lines suggesting triangles, garlands, semilunar segments, etc. belong to the Verbicioara motif⁷¹, the Vatin "Bela Bara" site would belong to the last-mentioned ceramic style. The illustration published by B. Milleker

⁶¹ Trbušović 1961, 163-164; Tasić 1961; Tasić 1962; Tasić 1963; Tasić 1964; Tasić 1971, 19; M.Garašanin 1973, 320; Tasić 1977, 22; Tasić 1983, 63.

⁶² Level IVa: Tasić 1965b, 196-198; Tasić 1976, 11; Tasić 1977, 20-21; Tasić 1983, 61, 64, Sl. 23; Petrović 1986; Tasić 1988a, 48-51.

⁶³ Gavela 1953, Tab. I/1-4; Gavela 1955; Jovanović 1961; M.Garašanin 1973, T. 57; Tasić 1977, 19-20, Pl. I-IV; Tasić 1983, 61, Sl. 21, 26-27; Tasić 1984c, Pl. XIII-XV; Tasić 1984e.

⁶⁴ Tasić 1968, 26, Fig. 8; Tasić 1973, 25; Tasić 1977, 22; Tasić 1983, 64; Medović 1996a, 167-168; Popović, Radojičić 1996, 26-27.

⁶⁵ M.Garašanin, D.Garašanin 1951, 32; Srejović 1965, 54-55; Kolarić 1972, cat. no. 33; Tasić 1977, 22, 24.

⁶⁶ Berciu 1961a; Berciu 1961b; Berciu 1966, 176-178.

⁶⁷ Tasić 1983, 67, 153.

⁶⁸ I would mention that in the opinion of N. Tasić the Verbicioara culture in former Yugoslavia has, like B. Hänsel surmised (Hänsel 1976, 57-61), only three phases: the first phase corresponds to stages I-II of D. Berciu, the second phase is identical to Verbicioara III at Berciu, and the third phase is characteristic of "Crvenka-Cornesti type" ceramics (Tasić 1983, 67-68; Tasić 1984d, 87).

⁶⁹ Tasić 1984d, 85. See also Tasić 1983, 58 (Vatin-Verbicioara cultural complex).

⁷⁰ In the *Prehistory of Vojvodina* or in other publications of N. Tasić, there is no exact toponym for the Vatin site. The finds from "Selo" and "Bele vode" are sometimes mentioned (Tasić 1974a, 215) or "Zamsko Polje" (Tasić 1982, 258). At Uzelac 1996, 37, in the area of Vatin, the sites "Bela Bara", "Zamsko Polje" and "Zeljeznička starica" are mentioned. I used the toponym "Bele Voda" (Gogâltan 1999a, 207, n. 101). J. Uzelac informed me that the current correct toponym for the former Szimics, Naschitz and Kory parcels of land, where the published material by B. Milleker (Milleker 1905, 3) comes from, is "Bela Bara".

⁷¹ Tasić 1984d, 85.

convincingly demonstrates this⁷². We would thus have a Vatina civilisation in which the eponymous settlement belongs to another culture!⁷³.

Such a conclusion could be reached because at the time N. Tasić examined the finds in Banat there was actually no available monograph of any Vatina or Verbicioara site. Systematic excavations were just at the beginning, as there were practically no discoveries from the Romanian Banat, apart from the settlements of Periam (Pl. VII)⁷⁴ and Cornești⁷⁵. It was reasonable to link this to what was already published: a few plates with Verbicioara artifacts. Today, however, we are faced with a different body of evidence, which I think demands that we revisit some older theories. It is obvious that without the previous efforts of a generation of specialists from former Yugoslavia and from Romania, it would not have been possible to take the steps forward. In my opinion, the Vatin "Bela Bara" settlement is a representative site of the Vatina culture, being located not on the periphery of this cultural manifestation⁷⁶, but at its very epicentre.

Moreover, I cannot agree with the suggestion that "Cornești-Crvenka-type finds" are characteristic only of a relatively short period of time, as long as the Verbicioara III phase continues. The stratigraphy at Cornești "Dealul Cornet"⁷⁷ and Foeni "Gomila lupului"⁷⁸ shows a somewhat a longer evolution of the Vatina communities that settled at these sites. The published pottery belonging to the lower levels of these sites suggests obvious links with the Gornea-Orlești group of the late Early Bronze Age⁷⁹. The import, probably Szeremle-Bijelo Brdo⁸⁰, found in the last level at Foeni "Gomila lupului" demonstrates that the settlement here was in use until the end of the Middle Bronze Age (Pl. IV/3). It is thus clear,

⁷² Milleker 1905, Pl. XII-XIII, XIV/2, XV/4, XVI/1-3, 4, 6-9, XVII/1-2, XVIII/6, etc. In fact, even N. Tasić, when discussing the ceramic forms of the Verbicioara culture, often refers to the Vatin settlement (Tasić 1974a, 210, V. 114-115, 119, Fig. 140, 142-142; Tasić 1984d, 86-87, Pl. XIX/1, 7). This has also been criticised by S. Morintz (Morintz 1978, 26, n. 45).

⁷³ Equally surprising is P. Medović's remark that the most significant site of the Banat Verbicioara culture is the settlement at Vatin (Medović 1997a, 46)!

⁷⁴ Roska 1911; Roska 1913; Roska 1914; Roska 1923. Also from the materials published by T. Soroceanu, at Periam "Movila Șanțului" there is a clear Vatina level that overlaps the early Mureș type settlement (Soroceanu 1991, 96-122, Taf. 41-84).

⁷⁵ Radu 1972a; Radu 1972b; Soroceanu, Radu 1974.

⁷⁶ Tasić 1974a, 213.

⁷⁷ O. Radu described ceramic fragments found at a depth of 130 cm, without being archaeological features (Radu 1972a, 279).

⁷⁸ In the test excavation I carried out in 1993 in the tell settlement from here, the base of the culture layer was reached at a depth of 170 cm.

⁷⁹ Gogăltan 1999b, Fig. 9, 12.

⁸⁰ I mention that I have not found a satisfactory analogy for this ceramic fragment. From the most recent bibliography on ceramics with white inlaid decoration on the middle Danube I quote Medović 1996a; Tasić 1996b; Šimić 2000.

at least to me, that the "Cornești-Crvenka type finds", in N. Tasić's understanding, cover the entire Middle Bronze Age period.

For I. Bóna the Vatina group, together with the Verbicioara group, is part of the so-called "Kultur der Kantharos-Keramik"⁸¹. Considering the time when his monograph was actually written (1958), compared to M. Garašanin, I. Bóna did not include in the Vatina group the urn field graves. Thus the most important settlements of this cultures are Vatin, Satu Mare, Vinča, Pančevo, Židovar, etc. Using the data provided by B. Milleker and probably having studied the unpublished material in the museum in Vršac, the Hungarian researcher rightly attributed the settlement at Satu Mare⁸², located in northern Romanian Banat, to the Vatina culture. From a chronological point of view, by proposing in 1998 the use of the system employed for the Early and Middle Bronze Age in Hungary for the Banat and Transylvania, I fully agree with the hypotheses put forward by I. Bóna. In the light of the material available to us today, I believe that it was not the Balkan background that was the direct origin of the Vatina culture⁸³, but the cultural realities of south-eastern Central Europe.

V. Boroneanț assigned to the Verbicioara culture several cave sites located on the Romanian banks of the Danube, in the area of the Iron Gates: Dubova (Climente's Cave I, Climente's Shelter/Potcapina) or the settlement of Gornea "Păzăriște" (Pl. VI)⁸⁴. This cultural classification has not been accepted by all archaeologists in Romania⁸⁵. Two significant observations by V. Boroneanț: the existence of several differences between the pottery from Gornea and that of the Dubova caves, as well as the occurrence of various elements borrowed in the Verbicioara culture from early Bronze finds such as those from Gornea and Orlești⁸⁶.

Publishing in 1977 the monograph *Gornea prehistory*⁸⁷ and later in 1979 together with C. Săcărin a synthesis on the Bronze Age of the Iron Gates area⁸⁸, G. Lazarovici attributed to the Vatina culture findings identical to those considered by N. Tasić to be Verbicioara. This cultural

⁸¹ Bóna 1975, 179-186.

⁸² Gogăltan 2004, Pl. XI.

⁸³ Bóna 1975, 189.

⁸⁴ Boroneanț 1976; Boroneanț, Miu 1998, 106.

⁸⁵ Critical comments at Lazarovici 1977, 92, n. 23. See also Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, 76-77, 80; Gumiă 1997, 43 (it cannot be excluded that it is part of the Cornești-Crvenka series of finds), 45 (difficult to attribute culturally), 47 (possible Verbicioara); Rogozea 1998, 140. Same opinions as V. Boroneanț at S. Morintz (Morintz 1978, 22, 26 – some analogies with the Vatina culture, but also with the Otomani culture) or G. Crăciunescu (Crăciunescu 1998, 115).

⁸⁶ Boroneanț 1976, 29.

⁸⁷ Lazarovici 1977, 90-93.

⁸⁸ Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979.

classification was based on a comparison of the pottery found in central and northern Romanian Banat with that of Oltenia⁸⁹. The arguments put forward by Lazarovici still stand today, and I agree with him that the area of the Verbicioara culture cannot be pushed westwards. If we are to accept that the finds from the Danube Gap belong to the Verbicioara culture then we would find ourselves in the following scenario: "there is no Verbicioara I-III culture, but this is about the penetration of an early Vatina group up to Oltenia..."⁹⁰. To this I must add that it is hard to explain why the Židovar tell, with its 3 m stratigraphy, belongs to the Vatina culture⁹¹, as we notice that it is located on the most natural access route of the Verbicioara communities in the Serbian Banat: the Danube – Caraș rivers.

According to S. Morintz, the most characteristic findings of the Vatina culture are: Vatin, Vršac, Gomolava (level IVa), Popov Salaš, Pančevo, Omoljca, Židovar, Corneşti and those on the Ostrov of Moldova Veche⁹². Pottery from the first three phases of the Verbicioara culture has been identified in the Banat area at Vršac "Crvenka", Vatina, Kladovo, Visag, Gornea "Păzărişte" (here Sicheviţa), Băile Herculane and Dubova (here Ogradena)⁹³. The answer to the question why the two contemporary cultures are spread over the same territory cannot be found in Morintz's book!

While discussing the westernmost area of the Vatina culture, N. Majnarić-Pandžić rightly argues that this typical Middle Bronze Age phenomenon developed differently in eastern Slavonia and Sirmium⁹⁴. Its early phase is not identical to the Pančevo-Omoljca group of southern Banat, but, due to the connections with the "Perjamoš-Mokrin group", one can speak, starting with the Reinecke A2 stage in Central Europe, of a Slavonic-Sirmian variant of the early Vatina culture. Later, in the Reinecke B1 period, the so-called "Lovas type" amphorae would evolve, defined that way in 1958 by Z. Vinski⁹⁵. During the same evolutionary phase, but later (Reinecke B2 - C1), the Vatina culture of eastern Slavonia enters into contact with those who developed pottery decorated with "pseudo-schnur". This led N. Majnarić-Pandžić to name the phase as "Vatin-Belegis". In her latest

⁸⁹ Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, 77-81.

⁹⁰ Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, 77.

⁹¹ Lazić 1997b.

⁹² Morintz 1978, 17.

⁹³ Morintz 1978, 22.

⁹⁴ Majnarić-Pandžić 1984; Majnarić-Pandžić 1998, 177-181.

⁹⁵ Vinski 1958, 20-34.

contributions she abandons the "Vatin-Belegiš" phase theory, aligning with the results of new research⁹⁶.

In a series of articles presenting the results of the Yugoslav-German mission to investigate the Feudvar tell and its surroundings, B. Hänsel and P. Medović, as well as other members of the team, provide important information on the Vatina culture⁹⁷. It should be noted that in the 2.50 m of the tell's stratigraphy, as far as they were investigated until 1990, several levels of constructions attributed to an early Vatina culture, a classical phase, a sequence in which there is a so-called "Pančevo-Omoljca Stils" and a late Vatina horizon were identified⁹⁸. Systematic research of the complete Titel plateau allowed the reconstruction of the prehistoric habitat of the area, as well as the links between a main settlement and secondary ones⁹⁹.

Trying to avoid any confusion between the Vatina and Verbicioara cultures, I have initially used the name of Corneşti or Socodor type materials for some of the Middle Bronze finds in the Banat¹⁰⁰. After studying a number of unpublished finds of the collections belonging to the museums of the Banat, I carried out a test trench on the Foeni "Gomila lupului" tell settlement¹⁰¹. This small excavation provided me with a reliable stratigraphy. Thanks to the courtesy of my colleagues J. Uzelac and P. Medović, I was able to compare the pottery with the finds from the Serbian Banat stored in the museum in Vršac and with the results of the Yugoslav-German mission to Feudvar in the museum in Novi Sad. On the basis of this analysis I proposed in 1995, for what some Serbian colleagues called the Verbicioara culture ("Corneşti-Crvenka finds"), others the Vatin-Vršac stage of the Vatina culture, and Romanian specialists the Vatina culture, the name of the *Corneşti-Crvenka group*. This term was based on two sites that I considered representative: Corneşti "Dealul Cornet" in Romania and Vršac "Crvenka" in former Yugoslavia¹⁰². Subsequently, I

⁹⁶ Majnarić-Pandžić 1985; Majnarić-Pandžić 1989; Majnarić-Pandžić 1994, 66-70.

⁹⁷ Medović, Hänsel 1989a; Medović, Hänsel 1989b; Hänsel, Medović 1991a; Hänsel, Medović 1991b; Hänsel 1991; Urban 1991; Grčki-Stanimirov 1991; Trajković 1991; Bukvić 1991; Gačić 1991; Becker 1991; Hänsel, Medović 1992; Görsdorf 1992; Hänsel, Medović 1994; Becker 1994; Hänsel, Medović 1995; Hänsel 1996, 246-249; Medović 1996b, 118, Sl. 3; Falkenstein 1997; Medović 1997a, 48, 53-55; Medović 1997b; Hänsel 1998; Medović 1998d; Borić 1998; Becker 1998; Kroll 1998; Falkenstein 1998.

⁹⁸ Hänsel, Medović 1991b, Fig. 4; Urban 1991.

⁹⁹ Medović 1998a, 53-58; Medović 1998c; Falkenstein 1998, 264-268.

¹⁰⁰ Gogâltan 1993a, 63.

¹⁰¹ Gogâltan 1999b, Fig. 12-14.

¹⁰² Gogâltan 1996, 46. I have advanced this designation after those "Funde vom Typ Crvenka-Cornesti" considered by Tasić to be characteristic of the third phase of the Verbicioara culture (Tasić 1984d, 87, Pl. XIX/ 2-6, 8). F. Medelet reproached me, in private, the fact that for the material from the Serbian Banat I used a toponym "Crvenka" and not

included the space between the rivers Mureş and Crişul Alb in the area of spread of this regional group of the Vatina culture¹⁰³, an area considered to be inhabited by communities of the Otomani culture¹⁰⁴ (Pl. IX).

Among other contributions, I would like to mention J. Uzelac's synthesis of the Bronze Age in the southern Serbian Banat¹⁰⁵. Concerning the subject of this article, I notice both from the distribution maps and the catalogue of finds that the eastern Serbian Banat belongs to the Vatina and Verbicioara cultures. Vatin "Bela Bara" and Vršac "Crvenka" as representative sites are classified in both cultures¹⁰⁶, stating later that among the six Vatina finds in southern Yugoslav Banat "...Vatin Bela Bara and Vršac-Crvenka being the most important"¹⁰⁷!

M. Gumă, being familiar with all my findings and arguments, took this name and based on what was already published, tried to define it in his book concerning the Bronze Age in the Banat¹⁰⁸. The Corneşti-Crvenka group was regarded as an independent cultural manifestation of the Vatina culture, which covered the eastern part of the Serbian Banat, the Romanian Banat and the territory north of the Mureş as far as Socodor. On the Danube there would have been a mixture aspect with Vatina I-II type manifestations. Taking only a "critical" look at this important contribution to the clarification of the Bronze Age realities of the historical Banat, apart from some issues related to the internal chronology of this group that I will not discuss further, I must say that I cannot agree with the separation of this group from the Vatina civilization.

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the name of Vršac. This observation should be clarified. The use of toponyms for the names of cultures, cultural groups, stages in the evolution of cultural manifestations is common in the literature of Romania or the rest of Europe (see for example the Noua culture, Wietenberg, etc.) and there has been no problem in introducing them into the scientific circuit. I have used the toponym "Crvenka" and not Vršac, as it would have seemed more logical, for several reasons: firstly, to respect the notion first introduced by N. Tasić; secondly, because under such a name this site is most often mentioned (Milleker 1896b, 91; Rašajski 1962; Tasić 1984d) and not least to distinguish the material here from other finds around Vršac, such as those at "At" (Rašajski 1975a; Rašajski 1975b; Majnarić-Pandžić 1985; Rašajski 1989, 13-14, Sl. 2; Tasić 1996b, 147; Medović 1996a, 169-170), Ludoš (Milleker 1897a, 161-183; Milleker 1897b, 40-52, Tab. I-V; Wosinsky 1904, 63-64; M.Garašanin, D.Garašanin 1951, 71-73; Kolarić 1972, cat. no. 77-81 (Vršac-Vatin culture); Tasić 1981, 205 (Cruceni-Belegiš culture); Tasić 1983, Tab. XIV/4; XIX/1-2) or "Strmoglovnica" (Medović 1996a, 167). This site is not mentioned by J. Uzelac (Uzelac 1996, 37-38).

¹⁰³ Gogâltan 1999b.

¹⁰⁴ Pădureanu 1973; Pădureanu 1988; Bader 1998, 47, Fig. 1

¹⁰⁵ Uzelac 1996.

¹⁰⁶ Uzelac 1996, 37, Map 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Uzelac 1996, 27.

¹⁰⁸ Gumă 1997, 43-54.

Considering the multitude of opinions on the Banat Bronze Age, it is reasonable to ask to which culture these finds actually belong? Is it necessary to introduce a new name in the literature? Is it appropriate? Does it respond to the cultural realities?

There are two basic arguments for proposing the term Cornesti-Crvenka group. Firstly, I hope it will avoid future terminological confusion. The Cornești-Crvenka group is a part of a culture for which, by virtue of tradition, the name Vatina culture can be retained. However, the Verbicioara culture is representative of the Middle and Late Bronze Age in Oltenia¹⁰⁹. The contact region of the two cultures lies in the Danube Iron Gates area. On both sides of the Danube there are sites that are difficult to separate culturally. They have been classified as either Vatina or Verbicioara. In this respect, in addition to the finds from the Dubova caves mentioned above, the settlements at Ljubcova "Stenca" (Pl. V)¹¹⁰, Lepen near Boljetin (Boljetin I)¹¹¹, Manastir "Gospodin vir"¹¹², Gornea "Păzăriște" (Pl. VI)¹¹³, Mala Vrbica "Livade"¹¹⁴, Moldova Veche "Ostrov" (Pl. I-II)¹¹⁵, Klisura¹¹⁶ etc., or those in the Timoc Valley area (Timočka Krajina)¹¹⁷ should be mentioned. Such a reality is quite natural at the "border" between two cultures, where, due to more intense exchanges and population movements, specific phenomena arise. The same situation can also be seen on the northern edge of the Vatina territory¹¹⁸.

In addition to the fact that the two cultures: Vatina (through the Cornești-Crvenka group) and Verbicioara are neighbouring and contemporary during the Middle Bronze Age, I consider that they

¹⁰⁹ From the bibliography on this cultural manifestation I mention: Crăciunescu 1996; Bogdanović 1996; Jevtić, Vukmanović 1996; Crăciunescu 1998, 115-116, Pl. I-X; Nica 1998; Crăciunescu 1999.

¹¹⁰ Gumă 1977, 79-86, Pl. VIII, X/3 (Vatina culture); Petrovszky, Gumă 1979, 54, n. 5 (Vatina culture); Gumă 1997, 47-49 (Vatina culture).

¹¹¹ Jevtić 1982; Tasić 1983, 84 (Verbicioara culture); Jevtić, Vukmanović 1996, 285 (Verbicioara culture); Tasić 1998, 34 (Verbicioara culture). For N. Tasić, the entire Iron Gates area belongs to the Verbicioara culture (Tasić 1998, 35)

¹¹² Brukner 1969, 137, T. XXXVI/4; XXXVII/1-4 (Vatina culture).

¹¹³ Boroneanț 1976, 26-28, Pl. VII/1-16 (Verbicioara culture); Lazarovici 1977, 90-93 (Vatina culture); Morintz 1978, 22, n. 33 (Verbicioara culture); Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, 87, Fig. 4-5, 8-14 (Vatina culture). Noile cercetări la Lazarovici et al. 1993, Fig. 10/10-13, 15-22; 11-12 (Vatina culture).

¹¹⁴ Vukmanović, Popović 1986 (Verbicioara culture).

¹¹⁵ Berciu 1961a, 125 (Verbicioara culture); Morintz 1978, 17, 21 (Vatina culture); Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, 79, 85, Fig. 6/1-3; 15 (Vatina culture); M.Garašanin 1983, 511 (Vatina culture); Oprinescu 1989, 242-243 (Vatina culture); Roman 1998b, 21 (Vatina culture).

¹¹⁶ Letica 1984, 193-194.

¹¹⁷ Srejović, Lazić 1997, 247 (Vatina culture or "cultura Gamzigrad").

¹¹⁸ Gogâltan 1999b, 53-55.

originated on a common background, represented by the Gornea-Orlești group (ceramics decorated with textile ornaments, tree bark-like incisions or made with brooms or combs)¹¹⁹. This explains once again the many common characteristics found in the early stages of these cultural manifestations¹²⁰.

The second argument in favor of using a new name is the need to separate the communities that inhabited the plain east of the Deliblat desert (Deliblatska peščara) to the north of the Mureş River (the eastern extremity of the Serbian Banat, the Romanian Banat, southern Crișana) from those who lived in the settlements of Feudvar, Gomolava, Pančevo, Omoljca, Vinča, Ljuljaci, Židovar, etc. in Serbia, or Liubcova¹²¹ (Pl. V), Moldova Veche (Pl. I-II) in the southern Romanian Banat (Iron Gates of the Danube)¹²². Although the whole area can be integrated into the Vatina civilisation, this 'northern' group produced pottery containing different elements. What makes the "Danube" group distinctive are: the cultural background on which it was formed, the stronger links with the Mureş culture, or the so-called "Pančevo-Omoljca style".

Compared to the elements underlying the formation of the Cornești-Crvenka group of the Vatina culture and the Verbicioara culture, the genetic background of the "Danube" group of the Vatina culture seems to have been partly different. Thus, for the settlements of the southern Bačka, Srem, Šumadija, it is considered that the so-called "proto-Vatina" materials were the origin of this culture¹²³. This is what M. Garašanin has more convincingly defined as the "Pančevo-Donja Varoš, Bubanj-Hum IIIb, Vecina Mala-Majur

¹¹⁹ Basic literature on the origin of the Vatina culture in Bóna 1975, 187-190; M.Garašanin 1983, 519; Tasić 1984c, 73-74; Gumă 1997, 46.

¹²⁰ I refer to coarse pottery decorated with broom or comb: Gogâltan 1999b, Fig. 9, 12; this can be compared to Popilian et al. 1980, 255-256, Fig. 3; Crăciunescu 1996, Pl. I/4-9, II, III, etc.; Crăciunescu 1998, Pl. VIII/3, IX/2-3, X/1, 5; Nica 1998, Fig. 4/1-3, 13; 8/9; Crăciunescu 1999, Pl. V/2-3; VI/4-5; as well as the survival of textile ornaments: Crăciunescu 1998, Pl. X/2; Nica 1998, Fig. 6/8; Crăciunescu 1999, Pl. IV/3; VI/5.

¹²¹ Gumă 1977.

¹²² At the beginning of 1997, when I wrote the article on the southern area of the Otomani culture, I was only familiar with what was published on the Moldova Veche-Ostrov (Morintz 1978, Fig. 5-6). Suspecting a situation similar to that at Vatin "Bela Bara" and regarding the Cornești-Crvenka site at Gornea "Păzăriște" (Boroneanț 1976, Pl. VII; Lazarovici 1977, Pl. LXVIII-LXXIV; Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, Fig. 4-5, 8-14), I have included among the Cornești-Crvenka discoveries also the sites of Liubcova and Moldova Veche (Gogâltan 1999b, Fig. 15). New clarifications made by M. Gumă (Gumă 1997, 47-49) and P. Roman (Roman 1998b, 21, Fig. 9), as well as studying the material here, has led me to revise my opinion (Gogâltan 1999a, 206, n. 98).

¹²³ Bogdanović 1986, 59-61; Bogdanović 1996, 101-102. The term "proto-Vatina", used for a number of materials from Ljuljaci, Pančevo, Omoljica, Feudvar, is not fully clarified. It is difficult to understand whether they have an organic connection with what is Vatina culture or precede it.

"Grube 2" horizon¹²⁴. In addition to the Pančevo "Donja Varoš" settlement¹²⁵ and Vecina Mala near Svetozarevo¹²⁶, similar finds have also been identified after the later level of the Baden-Kostolac stage at Omoljca¹²⁷, or in what is Ljuljaci I¹²⁸. Unornamented vessels with globular bodies and two handels have also appeared at Ostrovul Corbului¹²⁹, proving a wide spread of the phenomenon. This also prompted L. Nikolova to include them in a so-called "horizon of two-handled beakers" or the Bubanj III-Pernik culture and Pančevo-Donja Varoš type¹³⁰.

From a stratigraphic point of view at Ljuljaci or Omoljica these materials would be directly superimposed on the "Pančevo-Omoljica phase"¹³¹. However, at Ostrovul Corbului a different stratigraphic situation occurs. There, subsequent to some discoveries with "...gute Analogien mit dem Bubanj III, Vecina und Armenochori - Funden"¹³², a Gornea-Orleştii settlement has been identified. Also from Ostrovul Corbului we know that later there is a level whose "Materialien an die Otomani II-Periode von Vărşand erinnerten"¹³³. They demonstrate the sense of evolution of the Gornea-Orleştii group towards the Middle Bronze Age. Pottery decorated with broom and comb has also been identified in the lowest levels at Židovar¹³⁴. From the above, one may ask the following question: are these discoveries, which belong to the "horizon of two-handled beakers", the only ones that contribute to the formation of the Vatina culture in the Danube region? I think not, although we cannot give a definite answer to this question at the moment, but future research will provide further clarification.

Strong connections between the pottery from Feudvar and that of the Mureş culture have also been noted in a detailed report of the

¹²⁴ M.Garašanin 1998, 12. See also Stojić, Nikitović 1996, 207-212. The first researcher who looked for the Vatina culture's origins within the Armenochori horizon was M. Grbić (Grbić 1958, 37-38).

¹²⁵ Grčki-Stanimirov 1996. I also quote the preliminary report in which the site appears under the toponym "Vatrogasni dom" (Rašajski, Gačić 1985, 16, T. VII).

¹²⁶ Stojić 1986.

¹²⁷ Trbuhović 1968a, 177; Trbuhović 1968b, 61 (misclassified in the Mokrin-Periam group); Tasić 1974a, 212.

¹²⁸ Bogdanović 1986, 59-61, T. I-II; Bogdanović 1996, 97.

¹²⁹ Roman 1998b, 18, Fig. 5.

¹³⁰ Nikolova et al. 1999, 233-234.

¹³¹ Tasić 1973, 25; Tasić 1974a, 212; Tasić 1981, 201; Tasić 1984c, 63; Bogdanović 1996, 97.

¹³² Roman 1998b, 18, Fig. 5. I prefer to continue citing in quotation marks what P. Roman said to avoid being accused, unjustly in fact (see Gogáltan 1999a, 204, n. 74), that I did not respect the meaning of some conclusions put forward by the Bucharest professor.

¹³³ Roman 1998b, 19.

¹³⁴ Friendly information M. Jevtić and J. Uzelac. I was also able to see this during a visit to the site in September 2000.

excavations at Feudvar¹³⁵. We no longer know what Vatina and Mureş ceramic styles really mean. This fact also led I. Bóna, 30 years earlier, to propose the existence of a Gerjen group of what he defined as "Die Perjámos-Kultur"¹³⁶.

What can explain this reality? First, we cannot exclude that the two cultures have the same background, as discussed above. The regional differences are unknown at this point, but there were other factors besides the environment of the Lower Mureş. Secondly, coexistence of the two cultures in the lowland led to intense exchanges, as we saw it happen on the eastern and northern periphery of the Vatina culture. The Danube provided an easier route for the movement of these goods and allowed their rapid spread throughout its basin. The discovery of a Mureş culture grave at Starčevo "Kod Krsta" or certain artifacts from Pančevo "Okolina", about 100 km south of Bočar near Kikinda¹³⁷, indicates that such communities may have reached the southern Banat before the Vatina culture¹³⁸.

Regarding the so-called "Pančevo-Omoljica style", the stratigraphic findings from Feudvar are to be taken in consideration¹³⁹. Though more than 50 years have passed since extensive excavations were carried out at Pančevo and Omoljica, the finds and the stratigraphy here remained unpublished. The pottery assemblages from Vatin "Bela Bara"¹⁴⁰, some from Moldova Veche – Ostrov "Humca"¹⁴¹ or Corneşti (Pl. III/1-2)¹⁴² are also of little stratigraphic value. According to the available evidence, the pottery fragments of the "Pančevo-Omoljica style" discovered in the Moldova Veche-Ostrov "Spitz" (Pl. II) settlement point to a similar reality to that of Feudvar. They were found within 40 cm of the stratigraphy here, alongside pottery from the so-called "Vatin-Vršac" phase¹⁴³. In this case we have to accept that this type of pottery decoration is characteristic of a shorter period of time, covering the end of the Middle Bronze II – beginning of the Middle Bronze III in the southern Romanian Banat¹⁴⁴.

¹³⁵ Hänsel 1991, 79. See for example the vessels published by Medović, Hänsel 1989b, Tab. VII.

¹³⁶ Bóna 1975, 111-119. The Feudvar site was one of the discoveries of this group (Bóna 1975, 113).

¹³⁷ Girić 1987, Fig. 1.

¹³⁸ Jocić 1991. J. Uzelac considers this to be an isolated phenomenon (Uzelac 1996, 29, Map. 2).

¹³⁹ Hänsel, Medović 1991a; Hänsel, Medović 1991b, 66; Hänsel 1991, 80; Urban 1991, 106.

¹⁴⁰ Milleker 1905, Pl. XIV/4-6, XVI/10, XVIII/1, etc; Bóna 1975, Pl. 201; Kolarić 1972, cat. no. 83; Tasić 1982, Fig. 2.

¹⁴¹ Gogâltan 2004, 96, Pl. I-II. Roman 1998b, Fig. 1, 6 "zwischen den Dünen".

¹⁴² Both fragments belong to the same vessel.

¹⁴³ Morintz 1978, 21, Fig. 5-6; Roman 1998, 21.

¹⁴⁴ As long as there are no relevant stratigraphic finds in the area (we are waiting for the publication of the Židovar tell) it is very difficult to date these materials exactly. Now we can only work with indirect evidence: the end of the Corneşti-Crvenka settlement at Gornea

Therefore, it has great chronological value and represents at the same time a characteristic element of the "Danube" variant of the Vatina culture. As the links with this area become more and more disconnected, the number of imports decreases in the Romanian Banat and southern Crișana. While there are still numerous imports from Vatin, there are currently no finds from Foeni "Gomila lupului", and only one vessel currently found at Cornești. Moreover, no pottery fragments with such decoration are reported from the Lower Mureș area (Periam, Satu Mare, Sânpetru German, Arad, Cicir, etc.)¹⁴⁵ to the Crișul Alb at Socodor¹⁴⁶.

Regarding the two phases of the Vatina culture with which Serbian colleagues operate: Pančevo-Omoljica and Vatin-Vršac or Vatin I and Vatin II, I consider them to be in fact regionalizations of the same phenomenon, each with a distinct evolution¹⁴⁷. As we have already seen, the Pančevo-Omoljica group corresponds to the "Danube" variant of the Vatina culture. The so-called Vatin-Vršac phase is, by and large, characteristic of the Cornești-Crvenka group.

Even though N. Tasić has attempted to organise the available data, I do not consider that any significant chronological differences between these assemblages can be proved on a clear stratigraphic basis or by comparing artifacts (metal pieces, ceramics, etc.)¹⁴⁸. In any case the assemblages published so far cannot support such a hypothesis. The known bronze and gold artifacts from sites such as Gomolava¹⁴⁹, Popov Salaš¹⁵⁰, Vinča¹⁵¹, Židovar¹⁵² or Feudvar¹⁵³ on the one hand and Vatin¹⁵⁴,

"Păzăriște" (it is possible that the pressure of Pančevo-Omoljica communities led to the fortification of this site) and the formation of the Dubovac-Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare culture in the Danube Plain. Needles with conical head, decorated sickle-shaped shafts from Feudvar (Hänsel 1991, 66, 68, Fig. 6/1) and Ostrovul Corbului (Hänsel, Roman 1984, 196, Fig. 6/2-3) also provide us with a good chronological reference for the Pančevo-Omoljica "style", i.e., the first phase of the Dubovac-Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare culture: Middle Bronze Age III (MD II=Bz. B 1).

¹⁴⁵ Pădureanu 1973; Pădureanu 1988; Soroceanu 1991; Gogâltan 2004.

¹⁴⁶ Popescu 1956; Gogâltan 1999b.

¹⁴⁷ See also Tasić 1974a, 212; Tasić 1984c, 64.

¹⁴⁸ Tasić 1983, 64-67; Tasić 1984c, 63, 68-70.

¹⁴⁹ Tasić 1984c, 68, Fig. 5, 70; Tasić 1988a, Fig. 2.

¹⁵⁰ Tasić 1984c, 68, Fig. 6-8.

¹⁵¹ Vasić 1936, T. XXXIX/95; D.Garašanin 1954a, Pl. 46/1; Mozsolics 1968, 56.

¹⁵² Lazić 1997b, 25-26, Fig. 21.

¹⁵³ Hänsel, Medović 1991a, 116-117, Fig. 5; Hänsel 1991, 66, 68, Fig. 6/1.

¹⁵⁴ v. Márton 1912, 189, Fig. 9; Vinski 1959, Tab. V/Sl. 42-57; VI/Sl. 58-67; Mozsolics 1968, 28, 56, Pl. 26/1-8; M.Garašanin 1973, 328; Tasić 1974a, 220; Tasić 1984c, 70, Fig. 4.

Vršac¹⁵⁵, Pecica-Rovine¹⁵⁶, Satu Mare¹⁵⁷ or Corneşti¹⁵⁸ on the other hand are demonstrating a parallel evolution of these cultural groups during the 2nd and 3rd phases of the Middle Bronze Age (Apa-Hajdúsámon and Koszider horizon)¹⁵⁹. In addition, there are other finds of high chronological value, such as harness fittings and bone ornaments¹⁶⁰. As for ceramics, to the numerous imports of trans-Danubian encrusted pottery from the Vatina settlements in former Yugoslavia¹⁶¹, we can add the above-mentioned ceramic fragment found in the last level of the tell at Foeni "Gomila lupului" (Pl. IV/3). Other imports, such as Wietenberg¹⁶², may also be included in the discussion, which may prove the existence at the same time at Socodor¹⁶³, Corneşti¹⁶⁴ or Židovar¹⁶⁵ of ornaments foreign to the Vatina culture. To these we can add the connections with the Mureş¹⁶⁶ or Otomani-Füzesabony¹⁶⁷ cultural circles.

Whether or not the name Corneşti-Crvenka was well chosen, the publication of the materials from Corneşti, Foeni (which actually began) and that from Vršac "Crvenca"¹⁶⁸ will, I think, answer that question convincingly. Currently, the largest ceramic assemblage originates from these sites.

By publishing the findings of these two settlements as soon as possible, the third question concerning the individuality of the two groups of the Vatina culture would also be answered. Furthermore, besides Eastern Slavonia and Syrmium, Pančevo-Omoljica and Corneşti-Crvenka, another regional group may emerge in the future, south of the Danube in Šumadija and especially on the Morava, where thanks to the efforts of M. Stojić we are aware of several assemblages¹⁶⁹.

¹⁵⁵ M.Garašanin 1973, 328 (Noppenring).

¹⁵⁶ Gogâltan 1999a, 101, Fig. 42.

¹⁵⁷ Gogâltan 1999a, 104-106 (with older bibliography).

¹⁵⁸ Gogâltan 1999a, 93, 134, Fig. 9/2; 47/6.

¹⁵⁹ See also Falkenstein 1998, 39; Fischl, Kiss 2002, 131-137.

¹⁶⁰ For bone harness pieces I quote the works of H.-G. Hüttel (Hüttel 1981; Hüttel 1982) or N. Boroffka's paper, where you can also find the whole bibliography of the problem (Boroffka 1998). For other bone pieces see in particular Hänsel, Medović 1991b, Fig. 6/2-3; Hänsel 1997 or David 1997 with the complete literature and catalogue of findings.

¹⁶¹ The general framework of the problem at Tasić 1965a; Tasić 1972; Kovács 1988. The more recent bibliography can be found at Gogâltan 1999a, 208, n. 117.

¹⁶² Boroffka 1994, Karte 5.

¹⁶³ Popescu 1956, Fig. 33/2-3.

¹⁶⁴ Soroceanu, Radu 1975, 38.

¹⁶⁵ Lazić 1997b, 33-34, Fig. 16.

¹⁶⁶ Soroceanu 1991, 120-121, with the bibliography.

¹⁶⁷ Tasić 1974a, 221-222, Fig. 157b (Vatin); Banner, Bóna 1974, 53, 153; Bóna 1975, 186.

¹⁶⁸ See also Kolaric 1972, cat. no. 82; Tasić 1983, Tab. XII/4-5; XIII/1-3; M.Garašanin 1983, Tab. LXXVIII/7-7a, 10, 12; Gačić 1987, T. V/6; VI/1-3; VII/1,3.

¹⁶⁹ Stojić 1986, 148, Fig. 26-32; Stojić 1992, 217-218; Stojić 1995, 21-22; Stojić 1996, 249-251; Stojić 1997, 54-55, Pl. I/1-3; Stojić 1998. See also Uzelac 1996, 24, n. 9.

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Summing up this complex debate, I believe that when discussing the Vatina culture, the following realities must be considered:

1. Suggestive for absolute dating are the ^{14}C samples from Feudvar, Ljuljaci and Omoljica or those from other sites in our area of interest, which actually belong to other cultures: Mureş, Otomani-Füzesabony, Wielenberg (cultures for which connections with the Vatina have already been confirmed). These dates roughly places the Vatina culture in the first half of the 2nd millennium BC¹⁷⁰.
2. The use of tripartite relative chronology is based on the stratigraphy documented in several sites (the situation at Foeni "Gomila lupului", Feudvar, Ljuljaci), but also supported by the metal artefacts. Accepting these two basic premises will make it possible to establish a common chronological language for the whole of south-eastern Central Europe and further west, as well as for the Balkan and Helladic world in the south.
3. By placing the Vatina culture only in the Middle Bronze Age, we are responding to the realities of communities adapting to a relatively different environment than in the previous or subsequent period. The Early Bronze Age in the Romanian Banat is marked by the Makó-Koshi-Čaka culture¹⁷¹, Somogyvár-Vinkovci¹⁷², Sânpetru-German-Pančevo finds¹⁷³, the Mureş I culture¹⁷⁴ and the Gornea-Orleştii group¹⁷⁵ (Fig. 1; Pl. VIII). If at the beginning of the sub-Boreal the rainy climate gradually changes, making the transition to a colder¹⁷⁶ and, in the opinion of some, drier period¹⁷⁷, around 2000 BC the temperature gradually increased. Compared to the previous Late Eneolithic period, we are witnessing an increase in climate warming and rainfall¹⁷⁸. These climatic factors are accompanied by the control of an abundant natural resource area and an advantageous geographical

¹⁷⁰ Gogâltan 1999a, 62-67, Pl. 8-9, 13-14, 16-17.

¹⁷¹ Kulcsár 1998. See also Gogâltan 1999a, 200-202.

¹⁷² A useful summary at Bondár 1995, 220-254.

¹⁷³ Gogâltan 1995, 57, Fig. 2-3; Gogâltan 1996, 45, T. II-III; Grčki-Stanimirov 1996; Gumă 1997, 22, 37, Pl. III.

¹⁷⁴ Soroceanu 1991, Fig. 1; Girić 1996; O'Shea 1996, Fig. 3.1.

¹⁷⁵ The bibliography on this late Early Bronze Age - possibly early Middle Bronze Age cultural horizon can be found in Gogâltan 1999a, 204, n. 71-81.

¹⁷⁶ Ćurčić 1998, 272.

¹⁷⁷ Vadász 1969, 90; Gyulai 1993, 18. A. Choyke believes that the sub-Boreal is characterised by a warm and humid climate (Choyke 1984, 25).

¹⁷⁸ Kordos 1987, Fig. 2-3; Járai-Komlódi 1987, 44-46; Gyulai 1993, 18.

position, to which other interdependent primary factors should be added, such as: a predominantly surface dwelling architecture made of wood and clay; a population concentration determined by insecurity, religion, housing tradition and social evolution; an economy showing a more pronounced sedentarisation of the communities compared to the Late Eneolithic and Early Bronze Age period and, last but not least, subjective factors, almost impossible to prove archaeologically, led to the formation of the first Bronze Age tells¹⁷⁹. During the Middle Bronze Age, this phenomenon becomes widespread, as this way of life becomes distinctive of this period¹⁸⁰. Other climatic changes are supposed to occur around 1500 BC¹⁸¹. To a great extent, the geographical distribution of the Cruceni-Belegiš culture is overlapping on the previous area of the Corneşti-Crvenka group¹⁸². With the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, the tells are abandoned, new metal artefacts are developed, and a new burial rite and ritual is adopted – the urnfields graves¹⁸³.

The abandonment of the Vatina tells and flat settlements is a long process. Their end should not necessarily be seen as sudden and violent¹⁸⁴, but gradual, as living conditions worsen and different groups of allo genetic populations appear in the Pannonian Plain. The following examples are suggestive. Take the case of the settlement of Vršac "Crvenka"¹⁸⁵. If the Szeremle pottery discovered in several Vatina settlements suggests a possible coexistence with those buried at Vršac "At", the Cruceni-Belegiš necropolis (with numerous Dubovac-Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare imports) at Vršac "Ludoš" is certainly later, bringing the evolution of this site to an end¹⁸⁶. The same situation occurs at Vatin "Bela Bara". However, it is difficult to say whether "tumulus" communities (*Hügelgräberkultur*), as suggested by the well-known warrior

¹⁷⁹ Gogâltan 2002.

¹⁸⁰ Gyulai 1992, 66-67; Ecsedy 1994, 21; Kovács 1994b, 23-24.

¹⁸¹ Kovács 1977, 21; Ingram et al. 1981, 17; Gyulai 1993, 18; Kovács 1994b, 26; Cárciumaru 1996, 20-23.

¹⁸² Tasić 1972, Fig. 1-2; Gogâltan 1998b, Pl. X; Gogâltan 1999a, Fig. 53.

¹⁸³ Gumă 1993, 150-152, with older bibliography; Gogâltan 1993b, with bibliographical additions. For the so-called Cruceni-Belegiš culture see also: Gačić 1995, 57, Pl. V-VI; Andelić 1995, 80, Pl. II/7-13; III; Dizzar 1996; Medeleț 1996; Gumă 1997, 55-57; Perić 1997; Gogâltan 1998b; Medović 1998b, 153-154; Medović 1998e; Szentmiklosi 1998.

¹⁸⁴ Mozsolic 1957. Recently the discussion is taken up by W. David (David 1998).

¹⁸⁵ Katalog. Sto godina rada i razvoja Narodnog Muzeja u Vršcu 1882-1982, Vršac, 1982, Fig. 2; Gačić 1987.

¹⁸⁶ See also Tasić 1972, 101; Tasić 1996b, 150-151.

grave¹⁸⁷, reached the area before the Cruceni-Belegiš culture. In southern Serbian Banat, the end of the Vatina tell at Židovar is due, I believe, to a population that used a baroque pottery decorated and encrusted with white. This may explain the presence of graves in the vicinity, under the present-day village in Orešac, in which there are elements of Szeremle-Bijelo Brdo, Dubovac-Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare and Cruceni-Belegiš¹⁸⁸. A similar situation occurs at Omoljica, where graves that can be linked to the populations that uses encrusted ornaments have been found¹⁸⁹. In the Danube Gorge, the Vatina communities were replaced by the Dubovac-Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare culture¹⁹⁰. Taken into account the finds in the key settlement of Ostrovul Corbului¹⁹¹, this new type of pottery started to be used in the late Middle Bronze Age¹⁹².

4. A comparison of ceramic assemblages published by G. Crăciunescu¹⁹³ and M. Nica¹⁹⁴ from southern Oltenia with those from the Banat clearly shows that we cannot speak of a presence of the Verbicioara culture here, just of common elements surviving from the same Gornea-Orlești background. Initially numerous, these elements gradually disappear, eventually resulting in a totally different development during the last phase of the Middle Bronze Age¹⁹⁵. While there are possible Verbicioara imports in the historical southern Banat¹⁹⁶, their number remains within the range of typical intercultural connections. Moreover,

¹⁸⁷ This does not belong to the Vatina culture (M.Garašanin 1959, 77; M.Garašanin 1983, 508, 515), but is obviously a "tumulus" discovery. The discussion at Tasić 1972, 108-115; Uzelac 1996, 32-33.

¹⁸⁸ Krstić 1962; Majnarić-Pandžić 1989.

¹⁸⁹ Rašajsky 1985.

¹⁹⁰ Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, 80-81.

¹⁹¹ Hänsel, Roman 1984.

¹⁹² Gogâltan 1999a, 208.

¹⁹³ Crăciunescu 1996, Pl. I-VII; Crăciunescu 1998, Pl. I-X.

¹⁹⁴ Nica 1998, Fig. 2-16.

¹⁹⁵ Morintz 1978, 21-27, Fig. 9/8; 10; Nica 1998, Fig. 13-16.

¹⁹⁶ Tasić 1974a, Fig 143; Bóna 1975, 186, Pl. 202/14; Tasić 1983, Fig. 31a (Vatin); Simu 1943, Fig. 7 (Moldova Veche); Gumă 1977, Pl. VIII/1 (Liubcova) Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, Fig. 15/1 (Moldova Veche). For the time being it is a fact that the most numerous specimens of this type are in the Verbicioara culture: Berciu 1961a, Fig. 5/1-5; Morintz 1978, Fig. 10. See also Lazić 1997b, 33. For G. Lazarovici, this type of vessel may be a common element of both cultures (Lazarovici, Săcărin 1979, 78). As an argument in support of this idea I could bring two cups from Vatin, whose shapes and ornaments are found in the repertoire of the Vatina culture, and the handles in that of the Verbicioara culture (Kolarić 1972, cat. no. 86, 119). The two-handles cup from Vršac-Crvenka, considered by M. Garašanin as Verbicioara (M.Garašanin 1983, 510, T. LXXVIII/12), also appears in the Cornești-Crvenka sites in the Romanian Banat.

if there had been an effective presence of Verbicioara in the south of historical Banat, there would be no explanation for the existence of clear Vatina settlements, such as those on the "Stenca" at Liubcova (Pl. V), Gornea "Păzăriște" (Pl. VI) or Ostrovul Mare at Moldova Veche (Pl. I-II), in the region of the Danube Plain (Đerdap)¹⁹⁷. The discoveries at Visag¹⁹⁸ and the settlement at Iaz "Damb"¹⁹⁹ do not belong to the Verbicioara area²⁰⁰ and even less to the Balta Sărătă group²⁰¹. P. Roman saw in these finds (Visag-Iaz type) a distinct cultural manifestation²⁰², which I have classified as early Middle Bronze Age²⁰³. The hypothesis of their inclusion in the complex process of formation of the Cornesti-Crvenka group cannot be excluded; however, this requires a more detailed analysis that exceeds the framework of this paper²⁰⁴.

The existence of at least two groups within the Vatina culture is an older idea, proposed by M. Garašanin as early as the late 1950s²⁰⁵. This idea was adopted by N. Tasić who, however, saw the Pančevo-Omoljica group as a western variant of the Vatina culture²⁰⁶. Later it was called "westliche Variante der Vatin-Kultur" or "Sremer Variante der Vatin-Kultur"²⁰⁷. Based on the strong links in Eastern Slavonia and Syrmium between the early phase of the Vatina culture and the Mureş culture, N. Majnarić-Pandžić believes that it is possible to speak of a Slavonic-Syrmian variant of the Vatina culture at this time²⁰⁸. Such a remark, as I tried to argue above, seems to be correct. As a further argument, I would add the comparison between the

¹⁹⁷ A large number of specialists agree that these sites belong to the Vatina culture: Lazarovici, Săcarin 1979, 77-81; Morintz 1978, 21; M.Garašanin 1983, 511; Guma 1997, 43-47; etc. According to Serbian researchers they are found in the area of the Verbicioara culture (Tasić 1984d, 85; Jevtić, Vukmanović 1996, Map 1; etc.).

¹⁹⁸ Dumitrescu, Stratan 1967.

¹⁹⁹ Petrovszky, Guma 1979, 58-61.

²⁰⁰ Berciu 1961a, 125, 154; Tasić 1984d, 84, 87-88 (with some reservations).

²⁰¹ Petrovszky, Guma 1979, 66-71; Rogozea 1994, Pl. I (a "pre"-stage of the Balta Sărătă group); Boroffka 1994, 265, n. 31, 269, n. 40; Guma 1997, 49-50.

²⁰² Roman 1988, 221-222.

²⁰³ Gogâltan 1999a, 206-207, Fig. 54. I. Bóna also disagrees with the assignment of the Visag necropolis to the Verbicioara culture. He rightly sees links with the "Hatvan-Ottomány" circle, placing it chronologically no later than the end of the Early Bronze Age - the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (Bóna 1975, 192, n. 15).

²⁰⁴ G. Lazarovici also expressed the same opinion (Lazarovici 1977, 92).

²⁰⁵ M.Garašanin 1959, 95-103.

²⁰⁶ Tasić 1974a, 212, 457-458.

²⁰⁷ Tasić 1988a, 48; Tasić 1991, 14.

²⁰⁸ Majnarić-Pandžić 1984, 88.

pottery shapes and ornaments discovered in Cornești or Foeni on the one hand and Feudvar on the other. Compared to this group, the finds from western Serbia (outlined by M. Garašanin) from Dobrača, Jančići, Krstac and Kriva Reka²⁰⁹ or Lugovi-Bent²¹⁰ are clearly different, suggesting the existence of a regional group. Although the archaeological material published by M. Stojić is in small amount²¹¹, it is possible that a new group is emerging in the Morava Valley. In this case the Cornesti-Crvenka group may not be the only regional expression of Vatina culture, adding to those of Eastern Slavonia and Syrmium, the Danube (Pančevo-Omoljiaca) or the Moravian area.

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The above remarks, together with the pottery assemblage processed to date from the old excavations: Cornești "Dealul Cornet"²¹², Ciuta "Cornul dealului"²¹³, Satu Mare "Weingarten"²¹⁴, Sânpetru German "Mânăstirea Bezdin"²¹⁵, Moldova Veche "Insula Ostrovul Mare"²¹⁶ etc., or from more recent research: Foeni "Gomila lupului"²¹⁷, Diniaș "Gomilă"²¹⁸, Peciu Nou "In irigat"²¹⁹ or Cruceni "La sondă"²²⁰, may constitute a basis for further debate on the Vatina culture and, implicitly, on the Middle Bronze Age in the historical Banat (Pl. IX). As I have already noted, in M. Garašanin's article published in the volume of the second Roman-Yugoslav colloquium in Drobeta Turnu-Severin²²¹, or in M. Jevtić's contribution on several Bronze Age and Early Iron Age materials from the Romanian Banat stored in the museum in Vršac²²², there is already a willingness to discuss and include what was considered by Serbian colleagues to be Verbicioara

²⁰⁹ Zотовић 1985, 39, 44, T. VII/3-5.

²¹⁰ Nikitović et al. 1997.

²¹¹ See footnote 164.

²¹² See footnote 8.

²¹³ Petrescu 1988; Petrescu 1995. See also Gogâltan 2004, Pl. X.

²¹⁴ Bibliography at Gogâltan 1999a, 104. See also Gogâltan 2004, Pl. XI.

²¹⁵ Gogâltan 2004, Pl. XII. Excavations M. Moga 1948. Materials in the collections of the Banat Museum in Timișoara.

²¹⁶ Bibliography in Gogâltan 1999a, 96-97. See also Gogâltan 2004, Pl. I-II. These materials could be drawn courtesy of P. Roman.

²¹⁷ El Susi 1993; Gogâltan 1999b, Fig. 12-14; Gogâltan 2004, Pl. VI-IX.

²¹⁸ Milleker 1897a, 34-33; Medeleț, Bugilan 1987, 12; Gogâltan 2004, Pl. XIII. Survey F. Drașovean și D. Ciobotaru - 1997. I thank them once again for the opportunity to study these materials.

²¹⁹ The research at the point "In irigat=Stiezel", about 800 m south-west of the commune, will be published by F. Marțiș, who also informed me about the settlement here. See also Gogâltan 2004, Pl. XIV, XV/1-2.

²²⁰ Survey carried out with A. Szentrímklosi, in the summer of 2000, at the point "La sondă". See also Gogâltan 2004, Pl. XV/3-7.

²²¹ M. Garašanin 1998, 13.

²²² Jevtić 1998, 55, n. 13.

among what I consider to be the Cornești-Crvenka finds, as part of the Vatina culture²²³. N. Tasić continues to consider the Cornești-Crvenka group as part of the Verbicioara culture²²⁴. However, at present it is classified as an early phase of the Verbicioara culture. During my conversations with C. Ihde, I was surprised to find that independently of me (analysing the Vatina settlement at Feudvar) he came to the same conclusions about the existence of regional groups within the Vatina culture. This opinion was presented in his PhD thesis²²⁵. Concerning the Romanian scholars, some immediately adopted the new terminology, using it in the sense suggested by myself or M. Gumă²²⁶, while others were more reserved, regarding with suspicion this new classification of the Middle Bronze Age finds in the Banat, awaiting, understandably, new data on the Cornești-Crvenka group²²⁷.

Even though almost 300 years have passed since Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli published in his *Danubius Pannonic-Mysicus*²²⁸ the first Vatina artifacts and thus made the Feudvar site known²²⁹, issues raised by this culture remain far from being addressed. However, taking the example of the great Enlightenment scholar, we should collect all the available data to reconstruct the daily life of those we identify today as the 'Vatina culture'.

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²²³ See also Jevtić, Vukmanović 2000; Fischl, Kiss 2002, 130-131.

²²⁴ Tasić 1998, 34-35.

²²⁵ Ihde 2001a; Ihde 2001b.

²²⁶ Ciugudean 1997, cat. no. 145-155; Crăciunescu 1998, 115; Rogozea 1998, 140; Barbu et al. 1999; Petrescu 2000, 67.

²²⁷ Roman 1998b, 21; Şandor-Chicideanu 2003, 194-197.

²²⁸ The full title of the paper, quoted from Nebehay 1981, is *Danubius Pannonic-Mysicus, Observationibus geographicis, astronomicis, hydrographicis, historicis, physicis perlustratus Et in sex Tomos digestus ab Aloysio Ferd. Com. Marsili Socio Regiarum Societatum Parisiensis, Londinensis, Monspeliensis, Hagae Comitum, Apud P. Gosse, R. Chr. Alberts, de Hondt, Amstelodami, Apud Herm. Uytwer & Franç. Changuion, M.D.CC.XXVI.*

²²⁹ Nebehay 1981, 79-85, Fig. 4-7; Falkenstein 1998, 20.

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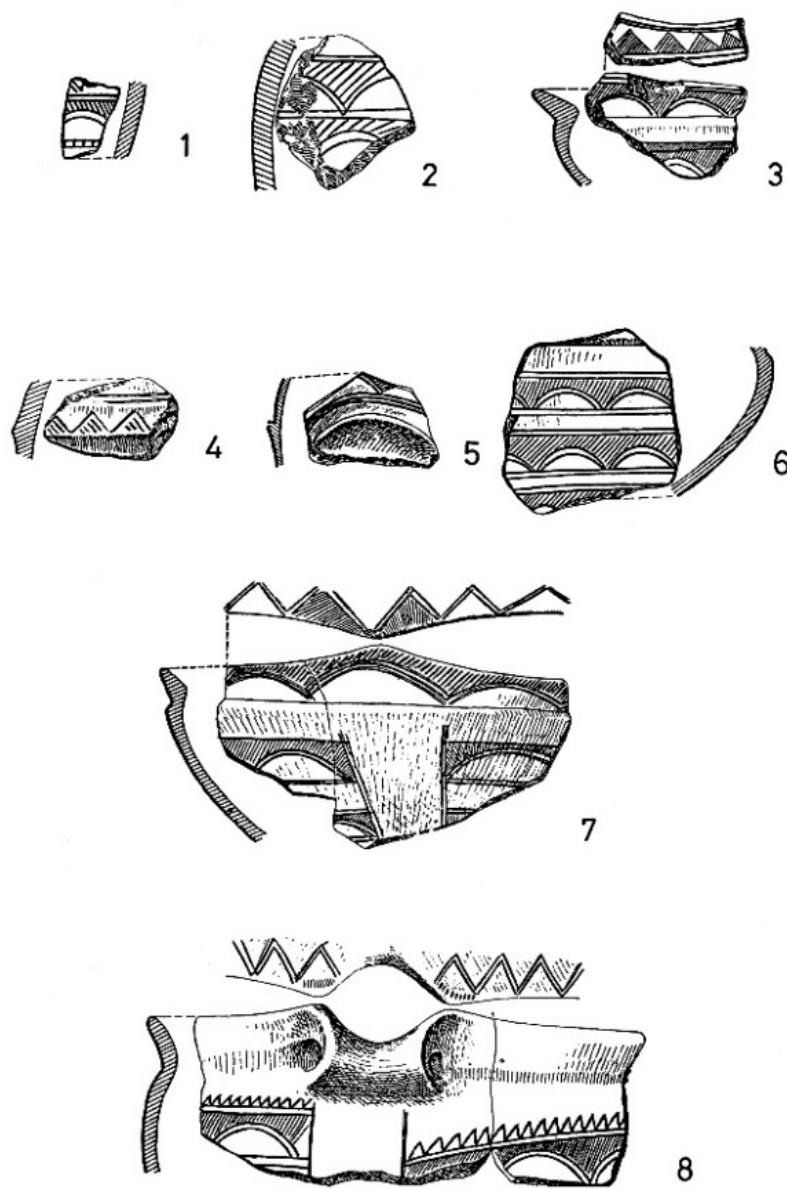
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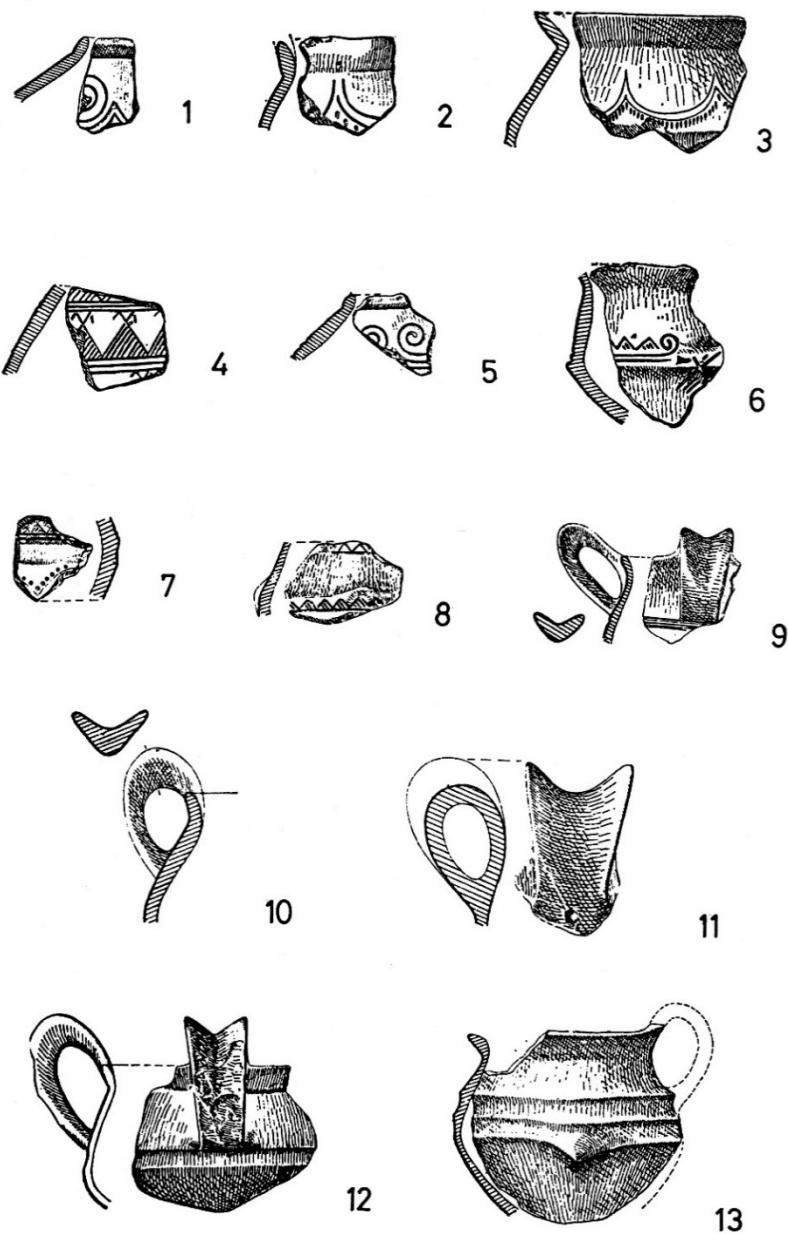
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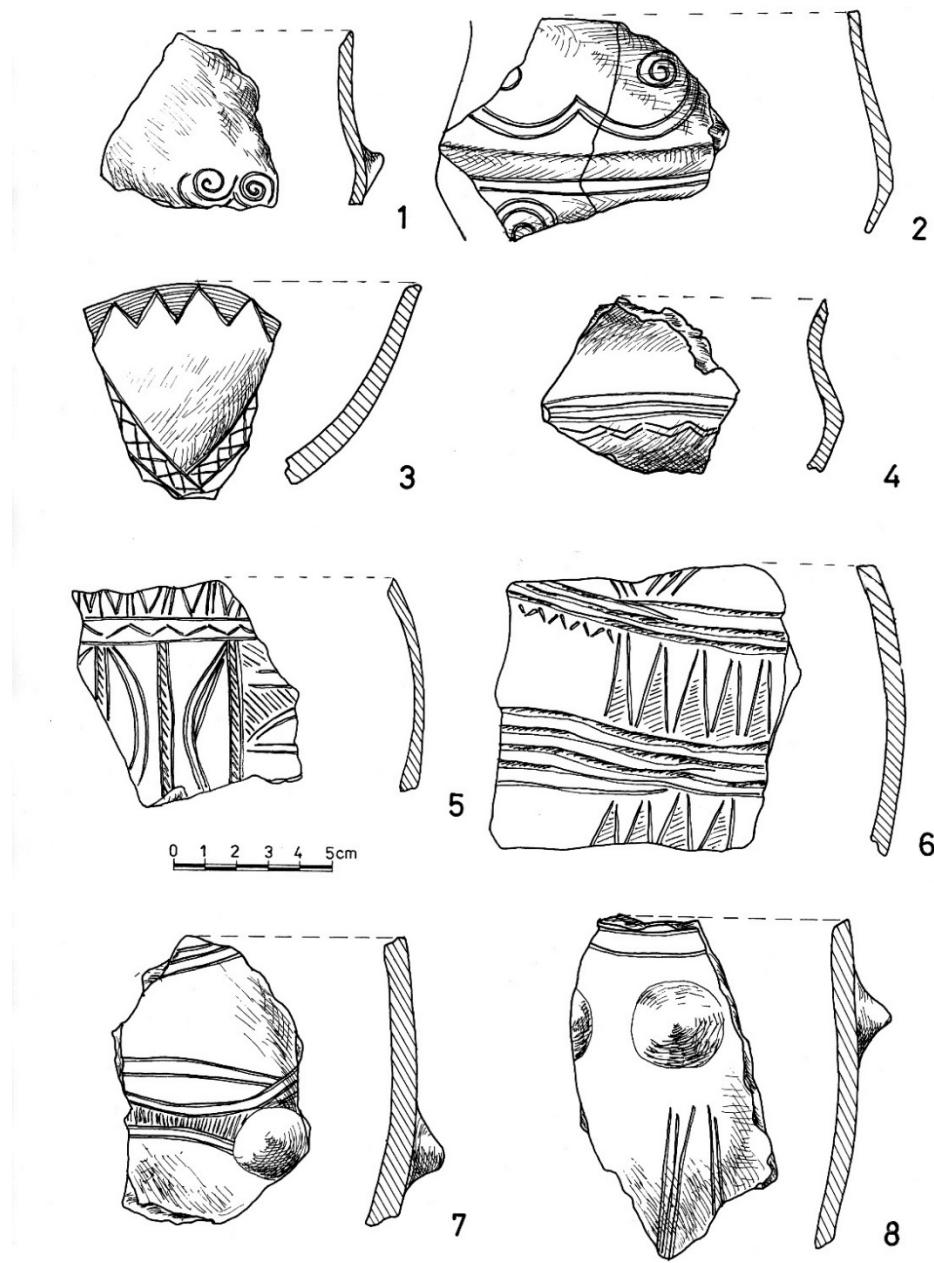
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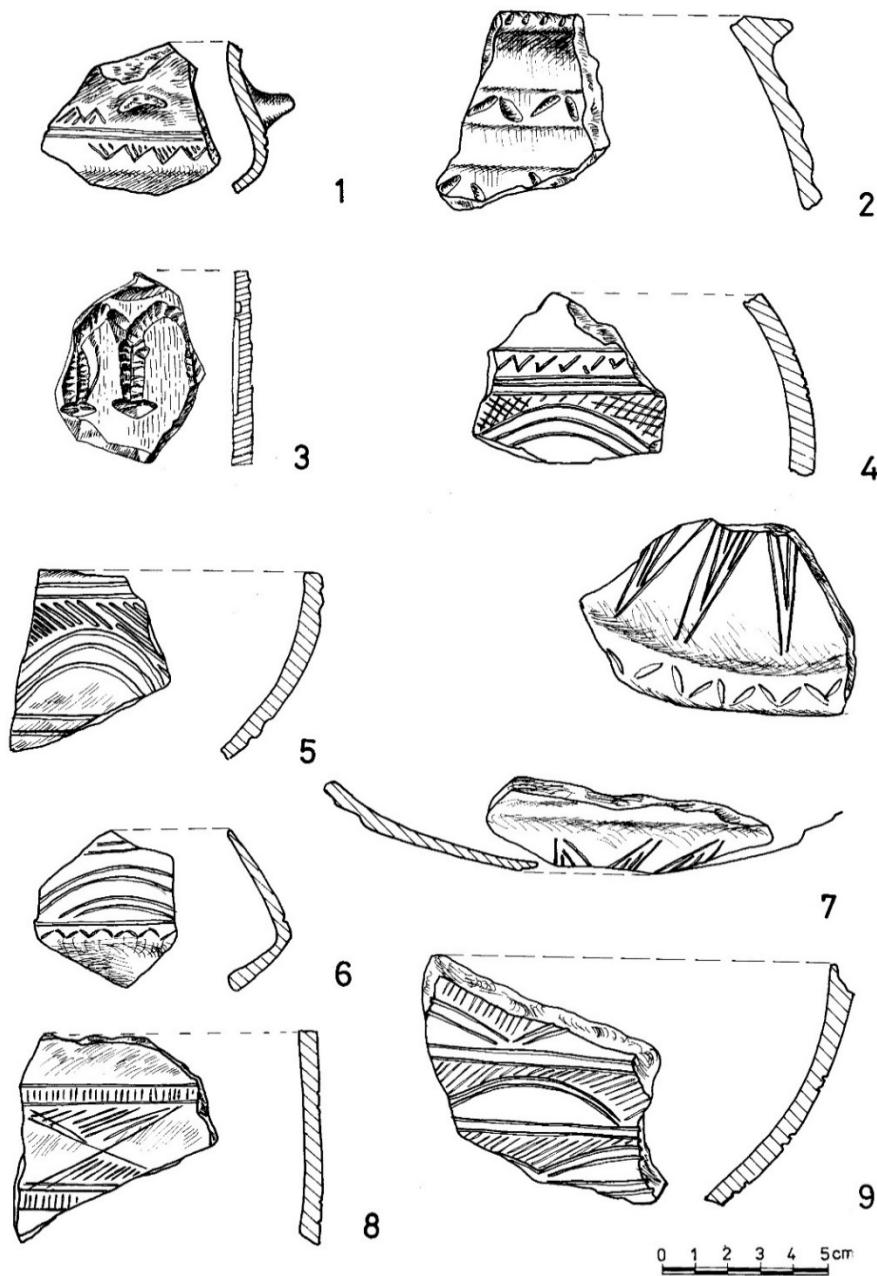
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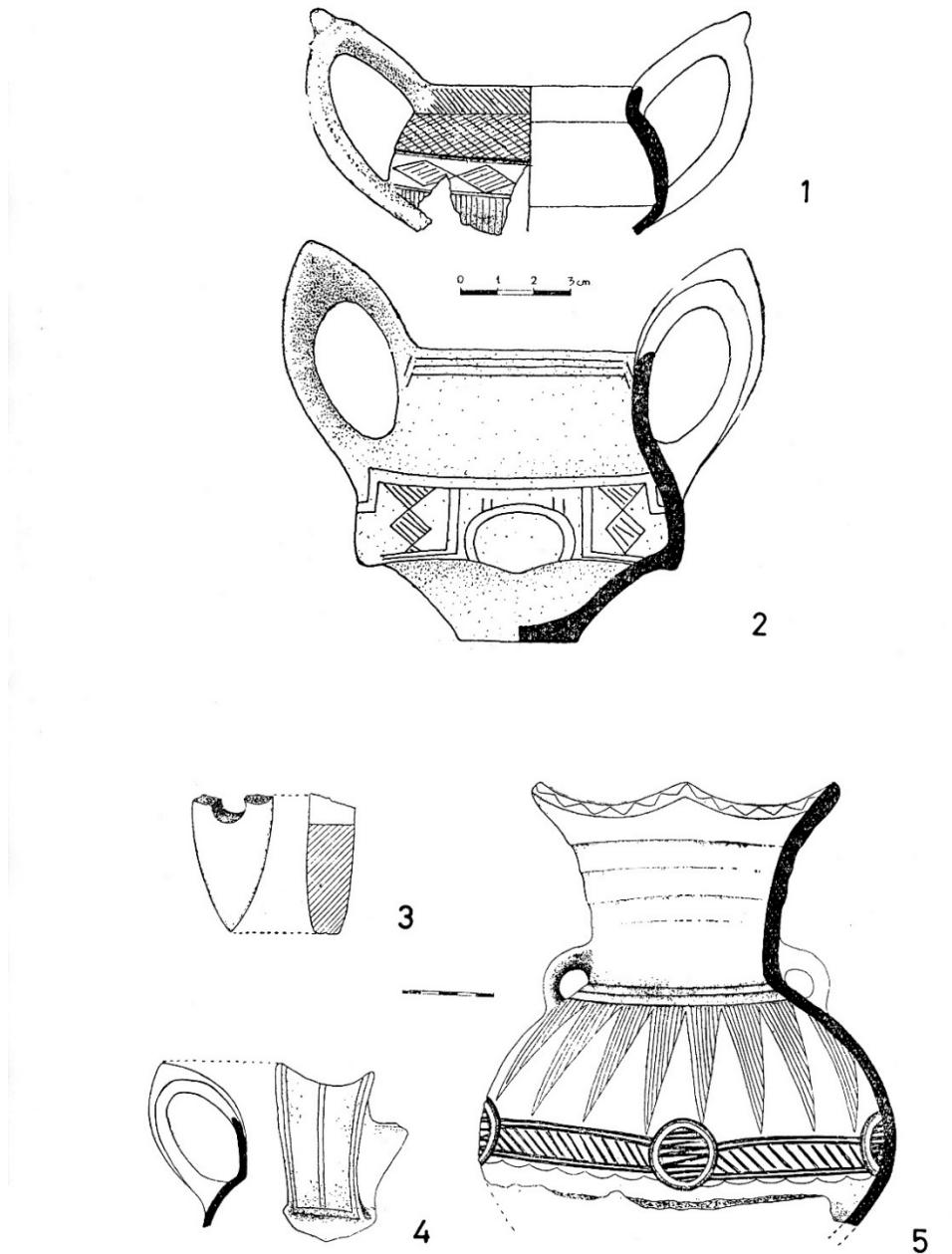
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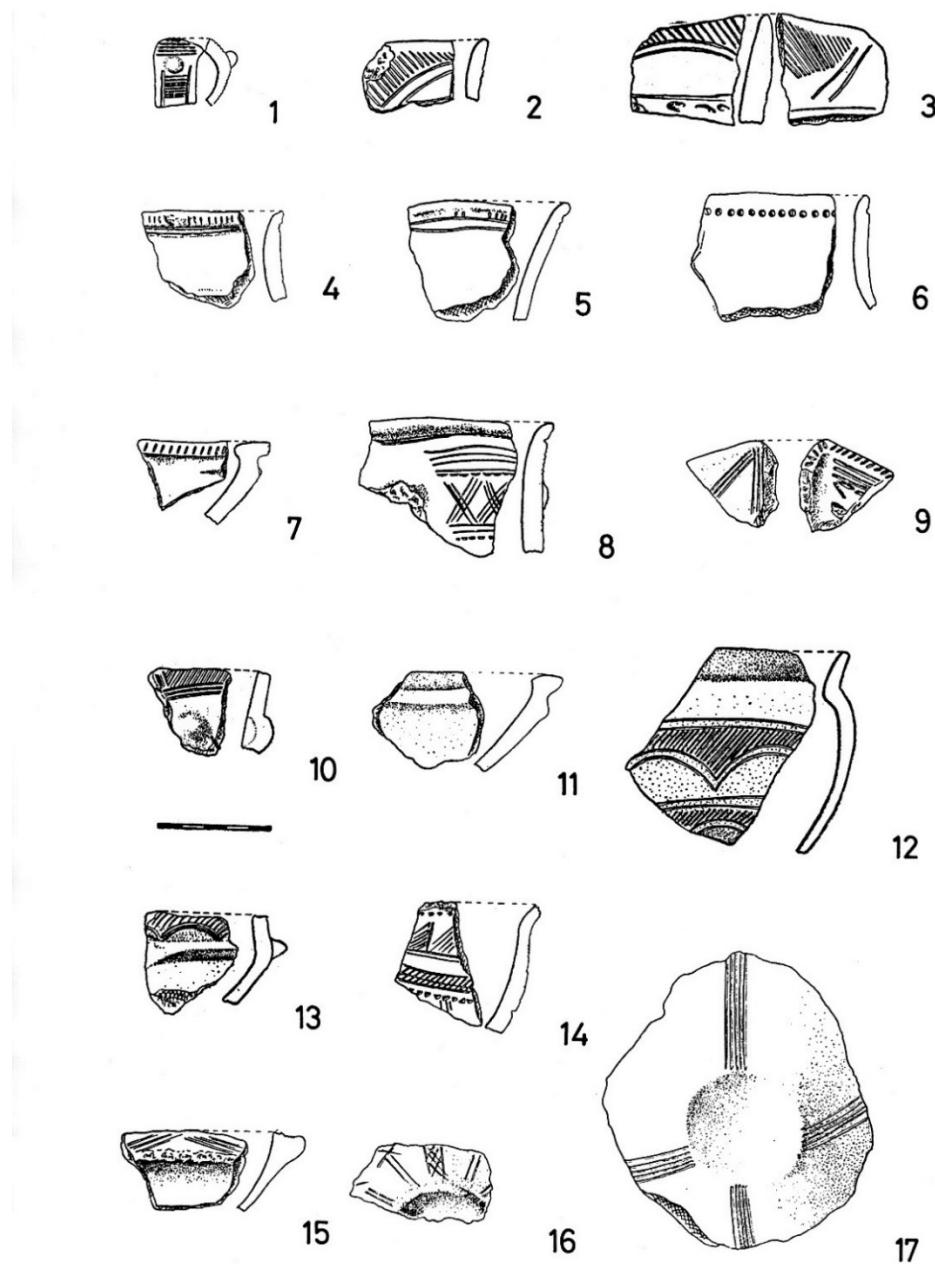
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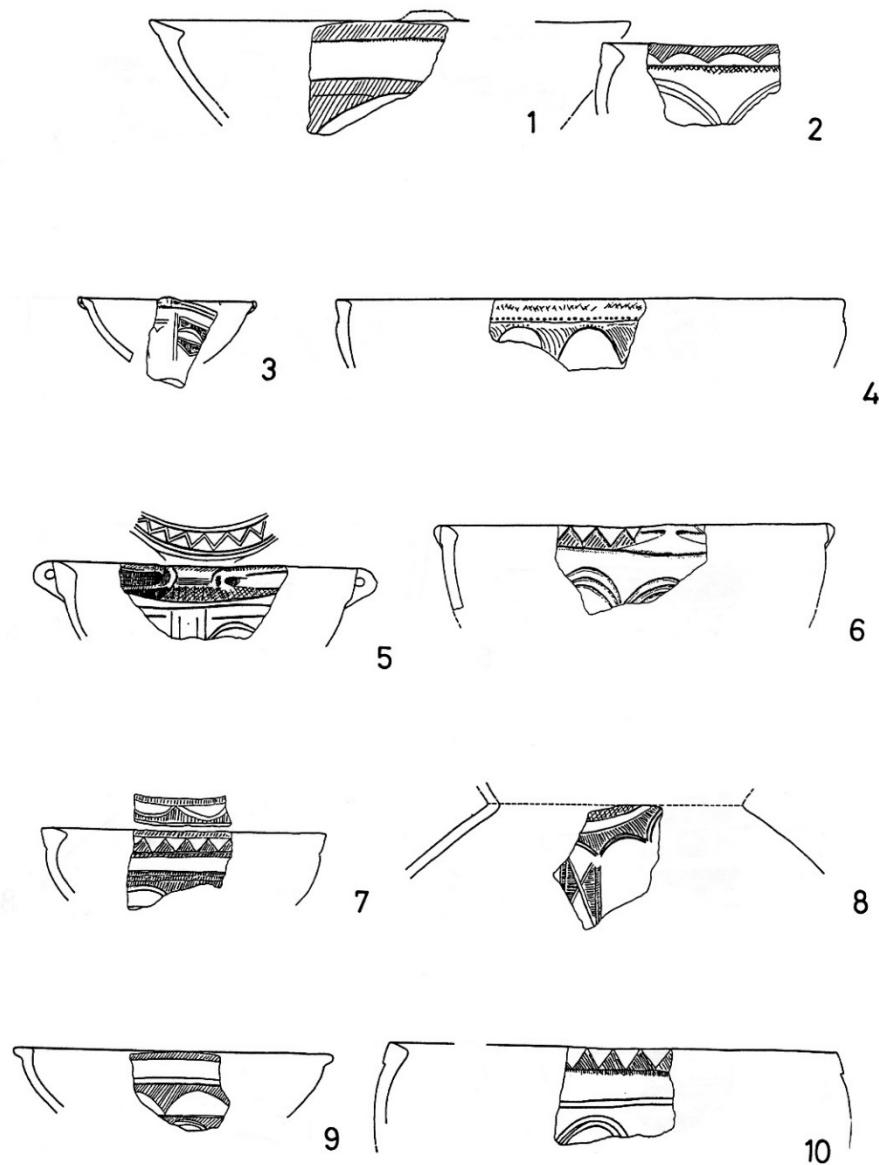
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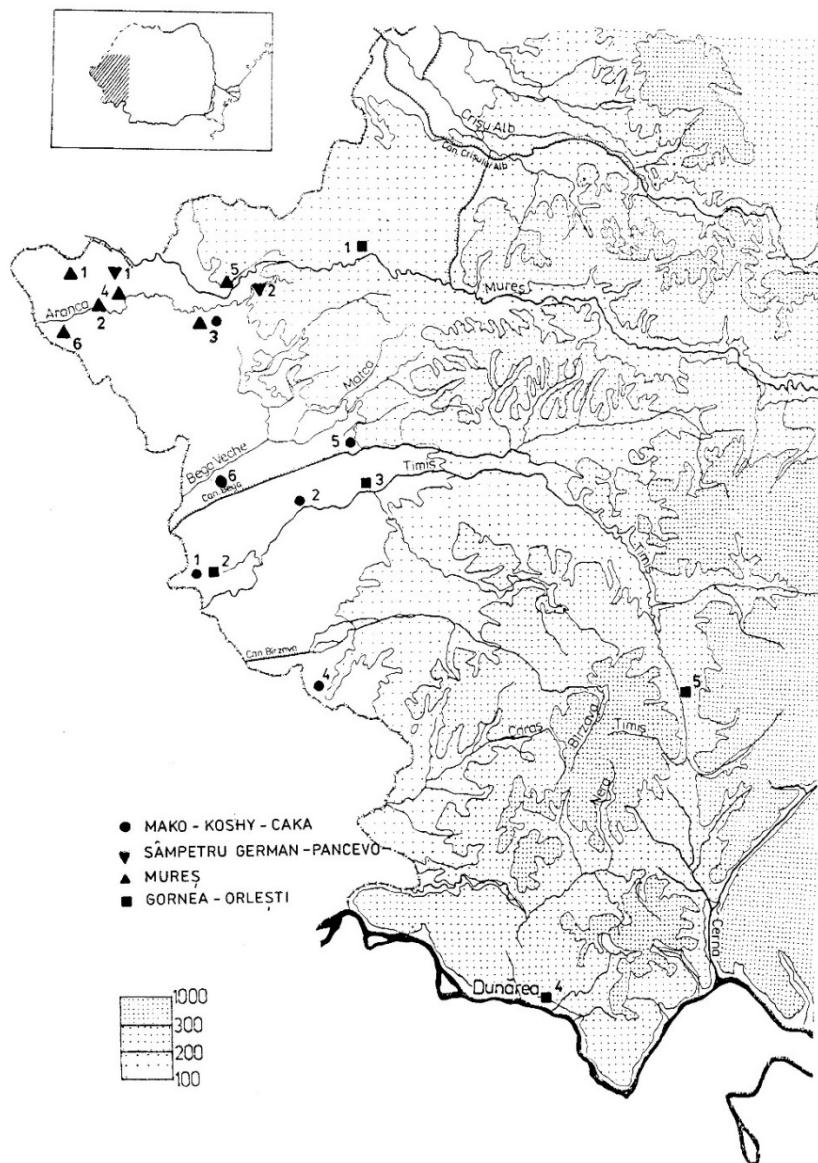
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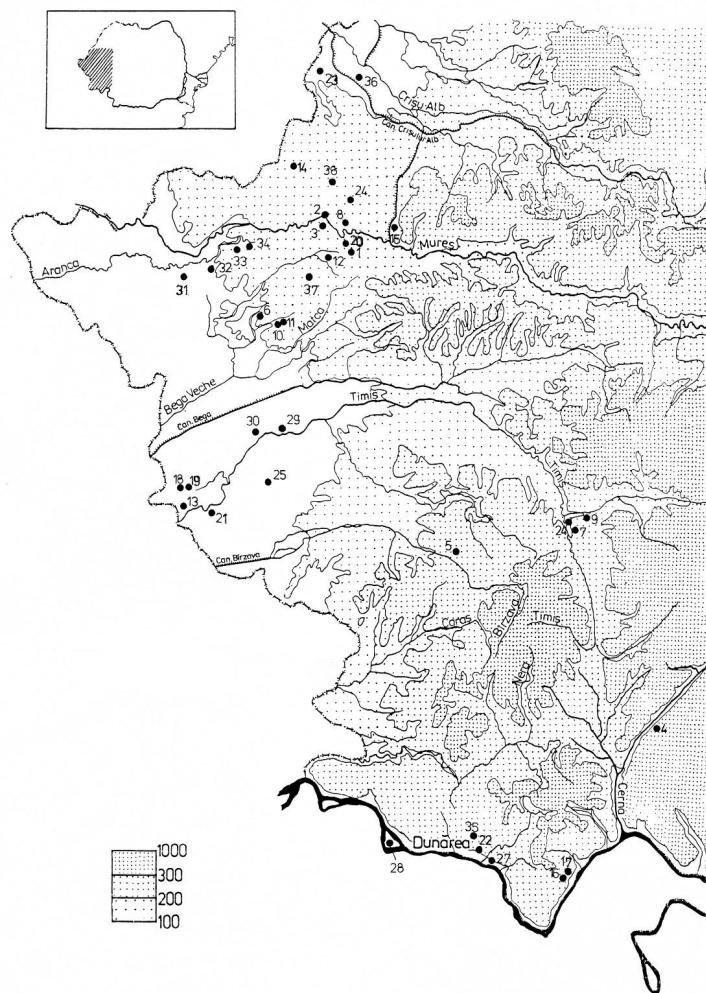
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