

RETRIEVING MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL CULTURE

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE LATE PERIOD OF THE BRONZE AGE IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN OF ROMANIA

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Abstract: The first chronological stage is dominated by the presence of the incised and incrustrated ceramics of Gârla Mare type, of which development may encompass a large segment from the Middle Bronze period. The innovations that appear during the Late Bronze period in almost all the sites, intensively researched, appear in the tendency of replacing the incised ornament with the plastic, grooved decoration. Thus, the cultural aspects of the Late Bronze – the end of the Gârla Mare culture, the cultural group Bistreț-Ișalnița, the group Govora (the last manifestations of the Verbicioara culture) – are followed, almost uniformly in this region, by the groups with grooved ceramics.

Keywords: archaeology, Late Bronze period, Oltenia, Gârla Mare, Bistreț-Ișalnița.

In Oltenia, we can distinguish, in the Late Bronze, two cultural aspects (zones): one in the centre and especially in the north of this territory, in the hilly sub-Carpathian region, characterized by discoveries belonging particularly to the group with Govora type ceramics (the last manifestations of the Verbicioara) and other along the Danube and Câmpia Olteniei, where the grooved ceramics appears starting with the last phase of the Gârla Mare culture and becomes more frequent in what is called the Bistreț-Ișalnița group.

Among the archaeological discoveries that are available in the actual stage of the researches, is evidenced the Gârla Mare type pottery that belongs to the wider area of the incrustrated ceramics groups situated on one side and another on the middle and inferior course of Danube¹. The presence of this type on the actual territory of several river-side states, determined the archaeologist from those countries to present under different names the same archaeological phenomenon: the Romanians called it Gârla Mare, the Serbians Dubovac-Žuto Brdo and the

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¹ M. Șandor Chicideanu, *Cultura Žuto-Brdo Gârla Mare. Contribuții la cunoașterea epocii bronzului la Dunărea mijlocie și inferioară*, Cluj, Nereamia Napocae Publishing, 2003; Christine Reich, *Das Gräberfeld von Szeremle und die Gruppen mit inkrustierter Keramik entlang der mittleren und unteren Donau*, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, 2006.

Bulgarian Novo Selo or Balej-Orsoja. It is obvious that Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare type are concentrated along the two banks of the Danube in a geographical area delimited at west appreciatively by the Belgrade area and at east, by the river-mouth of Olt meeting the Danube, area that is encompassed entirely in the study region of the present thesis. This is the reason why we shall make only a synthetic presentation of the researches and of the results that we have obtained up until now.

This archaeological culture was defined and studied especially on the basis of the necropolises, the settlements being less researched, fact that didn't allow the elaboration of a clear stratigraphic succession that will allow a division on three phases. The evolution phases are, in most of the cases, delimited especially on typological criteria. Through the rich and varied ornaments, associated with certain types of vessels, the Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare type ceramics gains a distinct individuality. From the richness of forms we mention the amphorae (actually some large vessels) with a long and trapezium-shaped neck, modeled in one, two or three levels, cups with one or two lugs, porringers with the opening shaped in three or four corners or with pedestalled, double or aviform vessels. Between the river-mouth of Morava and Moldova Veche is met a regional aspect that was named by the Serbian archaeologists Dubovac-Žuto Brdo, being characterized by the emergence of some pyriform vessels, with the funnel-shaped opening, narrow bottom and four lugs, the so-called "support", of relatively cylindrical shape, decorated with spirals and meanders².

An important presence on the entire areal are the anthropomorphic statuettes that can have a rich ornament but can also be undecorated. Such special items had been found at Balta Verde³, Cârna⁴, Vajuga-Pesak⁵, Orsoja⁶, etc. Both on the pottery and on the statuettes we find decorative motifs realized through incision and stamping that were then incrustrated with white paste. The most frequent motifs are the spirals, the zigzag lines, the garlands, the meanders, the triangles and the rhombs, but also the simple or concentric circles.

In Romania, the most important discoveries had been made in the area Ostrovu Corbului⁷, Balta Verde⁸, Gruia, Ostrovul Mare⁹ Mehedinți County and in the south of Dolj County, around the pools from Ghidici¹⁰, Cârna și Bistreț¹¹.

² N. Tasić, *Praistorija Vojvodine*, Novi Sad, 1974, pp. 464-465.

³ D. Berciu, E. Comșa, *Săpăturile de la Balta Verde și Gogoșu (1949 și 1950)*, in "Materiale și cercetări Arheologice", Bucharest 2, 1956, pp. 255-489.

⁴ Vl. Dumitrescu, *Necropola de incinerare din epoca bronzului de la Cârna*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing, 1961.

⁵ Z. Letica, *Antropomorfne figurine bronzanog doba u Jugoslaviji*, Beograd, 1973; Idem, *Praistorijska nekropola "Pesak" kod Korbova*, in "Starinar", NS, 24-25, 1973-1974, pp. 173-174, pl. IX.

⁶ T. Filipov, *Nekropol ot kâsnata bronzova epoha pri s.Orsoja, Lomsko*, Lom, 1976.

⁷ A. Bărcăcilă, *Antiquités pré-et protohistorique des environs de Turnu Severin*, in "Dacia", 1, 1924, pp. 280-296; D. Berciu, *Arheologia preistorică a Olteniei*, 1939, pp. 102-139; B. Hänsel,

The most known sites from Bulgaria are at Balej, where was dug a settlement with four levels of dwelling¹² and the necropolis with over 300 tombs of cremation in urn from Orsoja¹³ or the older and newer discoveries around Novo Selo¹⁴.

Treating the periodization of Žuto Brdo culture, Nikola Tasić¹⁵ established three phases in its evolution. The first keeps the ornamental style of the trans-Danube incrustrated ceramics, being represented by the discoveries from Dubovac, Gaj-Kovin, Vârșeț, Oreșac. The second phase is characterized by the ceramic forms with “baroque” ornaments, such those from Korbovo, Cârna and Balta Verde. In the third phase it is mentioned a degradation of the characteristic style, both for the pottery and statuettes, offering as example the statuette from Kličevac¹⁶.

The cremation in urn necropolis from Cârna, Dolj County, dug in the half of last century by Vladimir Dumitrescu, exemplary published in 1961, remained until soon the only archaeological station from this cultural group researched and published integrally¹⁷ in the entire zone. The material from this monograph constituted the base of the later efforts of internal periodization of the Gârla Mare culture, facilitating the chronological parallelisms with the archaeological zones and cultures from the immediate neighborhood.

P. Roman, *Siedlungsfunde der bronzezeitlichen Gârla Mare Gruppe bei Ostrovu Corbului*, in “Prähistorische Zeitschrift”, 59, 1984, 2, pp. 188-229.

⁸ D. Berciu, E. Comșa, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-489.

⁹ G. Crăciunescu, *Despre locuirile bronzului mijlociu din Ostrovul Mare*, in “Drobeta”, 16, 2006, pp. 143-164.

¹⁰ M. Nica, *Locuințele de tip Gârla Mare și Hallsattiene descoperite în așezările de la Ghidici*, in “Thraco-Dacia”, 13, 1987, pp. 16-38; Idem, *Câteva date despre necropola și locuințele din așezările hallstatiene timpurii de la Ghidici, punctul “Balta Țarova” – județul Dolj*, in “Cercetări arheologice în aria nord-tracică”, 1, Bucharest, 1995, p. 236; M. Nica, S. Lazăr, *Locuințele hallstatiene descoperite la Ghidici*, in “Cercetări arheologice în aria nord tracă”, II, Bucharest, pp. 87-112; S. Lazăr, *Contribuții la repertoriul arheologic al jud. Dolj*, in “Arhivele Olteniei”, SN. 14, 1999, pp. 19-37.

¹¹ I. Chicideanu, *Die Frühthrakische Kultur. Zur Bronzezeit in Südwest Rumänien*, in “Dacia”, NS, 30, 1986, 1-2, pp. 7-47; M. Șandor Chicideanu, *Cultura Žuto-Brdo Gârla Mare. Contribuții la cunoașterea epocii bronzului la Dunărea mijlocie și inferioară*, Cluj, Nereamia Napocae Publishing, 2003.

¹² V. Micov, *Materiaux archéologiques de la dernière période de l’âge du bronze en Bulgarie du nord-ouest*, in “Archeologija Sofia”, 12, 1970, 3, p. 49; G. Georgiev, *Die Erforschung der Bronzezeit in Nordwestbulgarien*, in (ed. B. Hänsel) *Südosteuropa zwischen 1600 und 1000 v. Chr.*, in “Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa”, Berlin, 1, 1982, pp. 194-196; T. Shalganova, in (ed D. W. Bailey, I. Panayotov), *Praehistoric Bulgaria*, 1995, pp. 291 and next.

¹³ T. Filipov, *Nekropol ot kâsnata bronzova epoha pri s.Orsoja, Lomsko*, Lom, 1976; Idem, “Arheologija Sofia”, 16, 1974, pp. 12-23; A. Bonev, *Trakija i egeiskijat svjat prez vtorata polovina i hiljadoletio pr. n. e.*, Sofia, 1988, p. 39.

¹⁴ V. Mikov, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹⁵ N. Tasić, *op. cit.*, pp. 457-458.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 460.

¹⁷ Vl. Dumitrescu, *Necropola de incineratie din epoca bronzului de la Cârna*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1961.

In 1970, Rolf Hachmann¹⁸ assumed the existence of two phases in the development of the necropolis, basing on the ceramics decoration's analysis – respectively the presence of the zigzag line and of the meander in the plan of the cemetery. Considering that there aren't any differences as regarding the ceramic inventory between the women and the men tombs, the author considered that the statuettes appear only in the 2nd phase, in the children's tombs. This classification was later drastically contested.

Thus, Bernard Hänsel, using different criteria, proposed a new periodization for the Cârna necropolis¹⁹, when discussing the chronology of the Vatina and Dubovac groups. The author established five ceramic forms that he considered he would be able to certainly date them, with the help of some bronzes from other tombs that contained the same type of vessel. Through the statistic method that he used, the author considered as being irrelevant the situations when certain types of vessels appear in small amounts (the double or aviform vessels) and also the double or triple tombs. Although he observed that the dividing in three phases of the cemetery from Cârna isn't confirmed by the planimetric study, Hänsel thought that we can't refer to an ordinate disposal of the tombs.

In his work from 1976, Hänsel takes again the debating regarding the chronology and the periodization of the Gârla Mare culture, thinking that his affirmations from 1968 would be also confirmed by the discoveries from Balej. With this opportunity he criticized the periodization made by Hachman. The end of the Gârla Mare culture was considered synchronous with the end of what he called the second horizon of bronze hoards, being placed around 1100 a. Chr.²⁰.

The discussions about the necropolis from Cârna were approached again by Ion Chicideanu²¹ who had objections regarding both Hachmann and Hänsel's periodization and, using the statistical-combinatory analysis, he came to the conclusion that the necropolis is unitary as concerning the periodization but divided in two areas, the eastern one (36 tombs mostly with meander decorated ceramics) and the western one (with 80 tombs and preponderantly grooved materials). Therefore, the necropolis would be unitary from the chronological point of view, constituting "a phase – the Cârna phase – of the Gârla Mare culture", the two areas, divided in two parts, would reflect the organization of that community as being one made of four kindreds, according to an exogamic dualist system. Using this opportunity, the author also shown that in the north Danube area, the Gârla Mare culture was followed by the group Bistreț-Ișalnița, group that makes the transition towards the Iron Age. I would make the observation that this kind of

¹⁸ R. Hachmann, *Germania*, 46, 1968, p. 368 and next.

¹⁹ B. Hänsel, *Beiträge zur Chronologie der mittleren Bronzezeit in Karpatenbecken*, Bonn, 1968, pp. 235, 239-142.

²⁰ Idem, *Beiträge zur regionalen und chronologischen Gliederung der älteren Hallstattzeit an den unteren Donau*, Bonn, p. 62 and next.

²¹ I. Chicideanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-47.

approach as regards the structure of the necropolis from Cârna might favor a reanalysis concerning the duration of this site, with implications on the effective duration of the entire group of necropolises to which, because of the great number of discovered tombs, is attributed a chronological interval of few centuries (see below), without being necessary.

The Gârla Mare discoveries from the south Danube were reanalyzed by Tatiana Shalганova²² who considered that in Bulgaria would exist, in the period that we are discussing, two chronological horizons represented first, by the classical phase of the cultures with incusted pottery and the second, by the grooved pottery, specific for the Early Hallstatt. Using the stratigraphic data that had been obtained in the settlements from Balej and from Vidin “Peștera Măgura”, but also the analogies with the similar discoveries from Serbia and Romania, the author tries to surprise the process of passing from the incusted ceramics of the Bronze Age to the one from the First Iron Age, characterized by the presence of the grooved decoration.

Christine Reich had a new attempt of periodization the Cârna cemetery²³, starting from a proper typology, based on the combinatory analysis of the decorative forms and motifs, realized by putting in order the ceramic inventory from 49 tombs. She considered that the cemetery developed on three funerary parcels, belonging to three numerous families, for each part corresponding tombs from the four chronological stages, the older tombs situating in the middle of each zone. The author emphasized that it can't yet be mentioned a decoration specific for each family or groups of tombs²⁴.

A major contribution, realized through the critical analysis made to the older and newer discoveries of Gârla Mare type, but also to the definition of the cultural and chronological placing of those sites, is the work recently published by Monica Șandor-Chicideanu who considers unitary these kinds of discoveries from the middle and inferior Danube area, from the both banks of the river Danube. The author placed the culture Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare in the interval situated between approximately 1650-1250/1200, followed by the Bistreț-Ișalnița group that is considered to end its existence around 1100 B.C.²⁵.

The discoveries of Gârla Mare type, most of them, come from the necropolises of cremation in urn, being known only few discoveries of settlements

²² T. Shalганova, *Das Antreten der kannelierten Keramik und der Übergang von der Spätbronzezeit zur frühen Eisenzeit in Nordwestbulgarien*, in *The Early Hallstatt Period (1200-700 B.C.) in South-Eastern Europe*, Alba Iulia, 1994, pp. 185-195; Idem, *The Lower Danube Incrusted Pottery Culture*, in (ed. D.W. Bailey, I. Panayotov), *Prehistoric Bulgaria Monographs in World Archaeology*, 22, Madison, 1995, pp. 291-308.

²³ C. Reich, *Das Gräberfeld von Cârna*, “Prähistorische Zeitschrift”, 77, 2002, 2, pp. 159-179; Idem, *Das Gräberfeld von Szeremle und die Gruppen mit inkrustierter Keramik entlang der mittleren und unteren Donau*, Berlin, 2006, pp. 43 next.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 167.

²⁵ M. Șandor Chicideanu, *Cultura Žuto-Brdo Gârla Mare. Contribuții la cunoașterea epocii bronzului la Dunărea mijlocie și inferioară*, Cluj, 2003, pp. 209-213.

(more known are those from Ghidici, Ostrovul Mare in România and Balej in Bulgaria); in most of them hadn't been made systematical digs that would allow them to benefit by an adequate documentation.

An interesting situation can be seen in the south of Oltenia, in the site already mentioned from Ghidici, Dolj County. Here, at six kilometers south from Ghidici, between the dunes of sand and Danube, in the point "Balta Țarovei I", had been dug by Marin Nica together with the undersigned, several dwellings, among which six belong to the Gârla Mare settlement (L 1, L 3, L 4, L 5, L 6, L 11); two others had been attributed to the dwelling with ceramics belonging to the Bistreț Ișalnița type (L 2, L 9) and other four was found ceramics specific to the First Iron Age, of Vârtop type (L 7, L 8, L 10 and L 1 – "Balta Țarovei II")²⁶. Other Gârla Mare settlements had been researched at Izvoarele, commune Gruia and at Ostrovul Mare-"Colonie", both in Mehedinți County²⁷.

The incrustated ceramics about which we discussed is, maybe, one of most rich ornamented ceramics of the Middle and Late Bronze from Europe, because of the decoration technique (incision and incrusting with white paste) that allowed the realization of various motifs. We must mention here the observation made by Vl. Dumitrescu²⁸, unfortunately less exploited in the studies dedicated to this group of necropolises, according to which the white substance used for filling the incrusting of the decoration was made of a paste that contained cremated "bones dust", assumingly human. The importance of this information from the anthropological perspective for the interpretation of the funerary cult ideology is certainly a special one²⁹.

At the first glance, we are under the impression that we are facing a unity of forms and decorations, kept with a certain consequence by the communities that lived both on the right and the left bank of the Danube. Analyzing the ornamental motifs, on one side, the way in which they are associated on the vessel, but also their frequency, one can notice major differences among the different groups of

²⁶ S. Lazăr, *Sfârșitul epocii bronzului și începutul epocii fierului în sud-vestul României*, Craiova, Universitaria Publishing, 2011, pp. 225-228; A. Ceaușescu, S. Lazăr, *Habitatul din Câmpia Olteniei din preistorie până în epoca contemporană*, Craiova, Universitaria Publishing, 2013, pp. 54-65.

²⁷ G. Crăciunescu, *Noi descoperiri arheologice din epoca bronzului de la Ostrovul Mare – Colonie*, in "Drobeta", 4, 1980, pp. 43-58; Idem, *Așezare a culturii Gârla Mare la Izvoarele*, in "Thraco-Dacica", 1-2, 1992, pp. 43-47; Idem, *Despre locuirile bronzului mijlociu din Ostrovul Mare*, in "Drobeta", 16, 2006, pp. 143-164.

²⁸ Vl. Dumitrescu, *op. cit.*, p. 160 next, where it is published the report of the chemical analysis regarding the white paste used for incrusting from the decoration of the Cârna "Balta Nasta" vessels.

²⁹ To evidence the importance of such analyses that will support the archaeological research, we must mention the recent results obtained after the analysis of "the so-called ashy content" from the ash-places of Noua type, we can cite the sedimentological studies, recently made in such "ash-places" from Basarabia that proved to be rich in calcium carbonate and phosphates, but not in ash resulted after wood combustion (E. Kaiser, E. Sava, *Die "Aschenhügel" der späten Bronzezeit im Nordpontikum. Erste Ergebnisse eines Forschungsprojekts in Nordmoldavien*, in "Eurasia", 12, 2006, pp. 137-172).

discoveries. Understood like that, these kinds of variations may reflect the group identity of these communities. Using this procedure, one might eventually notice the grouping of the different zonal communities from which is made this big “family” of the incusted pottery. This theme could be enlarged but this measure would move us away from the object of the present work.

The end of the Gârla Mare culture is situated, in what we call here, the late period of the Bronze Age, no matter the manner in which this moment varies from the chronological point of view³⁰.

B. Hänsel considered that the discovery from Işalniţa represents the eponymous discovery of the group with the same name, presenting traditions of the Gârla Mare style and also of the Govora group (defined like this in order to replace the phases IV and V of the Verbicioara culture). Chronologically, it may be considered to be situated between this last one and the Vârtop group or even partially parallel with this last one³¹. Bistreţ-Işalniţa type ceramics was considered only partially contemporary with the Govora type one but also with that characteristic to the second phase of the necropolises from Cruceni and Beograd “Karaburma”³².

On the occasion of the digs made in the area Bistreţ – Cârna, Ion Motzoi Chicideanu identified a cultural group that the author chronologically placed it during the interval of the 13th-12th centuries a. Chr. and that he called *Bistreţ – Işalniţa*³³, encompassing some discoveries analog to the two eponymous sites. At a closer examination, one can notice differences that shouldn't be neglected and they predicted from the start how complex would be the problems emerged in this context. That group was thought to occupy the Danube's meadow, from the Clisură to the river Olt's mouth and would represent the last manifestation of the Bronze Age in that area, being contemporary, in Banat, with the second phase of the cultural group Cruceni-Belegiş and preceding the appearance of the Vârtop type

³⁰ Are already known the different opinions expressed on this dating. Thus, we cite the main hypotheses, Vl. Dumitrescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-306: about 1200 a. Chr.; B. Hänsel, *Beiträge zur regionalen und chronologischen Gliederung der älteren Hallstattzeit an den unteren Donau*, Bonn, pp. 62-65: 1100 a. Chr.; N. Tasić, *Praistorija Vojvodine*, Novi Sad, 1974, p. 461: 1400 a. Chr.; S. Morintz, *Contribuţii arheologice la istoria tracilor timpurii*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1978, p. 190: post 1200 a. Chr.; M. Şandor-Chicideanu, *op. cit.*, p. 213: 1250 a. Chr. in Oltenia and 1200 a. Chr. in Bulgaria (also using ¹⁴C data).

³¹ B. Hänsel, *op. cit.*, p. 101 next.

³² *Ibidem*. B. Hänsel in his work, considers the group Işalniţa contemporary with the phase Babadag I, having certain affinities with the group Vârtop and following after the group Govora. As regarding the position that the mentioned group would have, the author presents two hypotheses: the first is that according to which this group would constitute an intermediary horizon between the group Govora and the grooved pottery of Vârtop type. The second would be that the groups Govora and Vârtop had been contemporary and belonged to the autochthon communities and the Işalniţa type grooved pottery would have arrived from the external area, on the Danube's course.

³³ I. Chicideanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-47.

grooved ceramics³⁴. The mentioned author considered that this ceramic group appeared after grafting some western influences of Cruceni-Belegiș type on the Gârla Mare local cultural fond. Ion Chicideanu reunited then in the Bistreț-Ișalnița group a series of discoveries in which appeared ceramic forms, similar to those from the eponymous stations³⁵.

The ceramics from the Bistreț-Ișalnița cultural group³⁶ were attributed as characteristic a certain repertoire of forms that includes bitronconic amphorae (large vessels), bowls of which shape in the part of the maximum diameter is square, two lugged cups, also with a square form, double vessels (salt cellar), semispherical cups with overdimensioned lug, the ornaments being realized especially narrowed and oblique, placed on its body, garland-shaped, on the vessel's neck. Unlike the vessels from the Ișalnița funerary complex, discovered by accident³⁷, at Bistreț were attributed to this group a series of large vessels similar in form to the Cruceni type urns, salt cellar vessels, pedestalled porringers with the lobate edge and square shaped cups. Only this last type of vessel is present in the both discoveries. The pedestalled vessels, with cylindrical neck and with a square-shaped body from Ișalnița are decorated with geometrical motives that remind the ornaments of the Verbicioara ceramics and the two *kantharoi*, also with the square-shaped body, are similar with some cups discovered at Cârna. A vessel discovered isolate at Călărași, Dolj County³⁸, a locality near the Danube, in a certain extent similar in shape with the vessels from Ișalnița, is decorated with grooved garlands and it is attributed to this group.

We should notice that the Ișalnița site, near Craiova, being at a great distance from the Danube's course, might eventually explain formal differences between the two discoveries, but the differences in decoration, are the main reason for which existed different points of view as regarding the cultural attribution: either of a final phase of the Verbicioara culture³⁹, or a singular group that came later after the Gârla Mare culture⁴⁰.

It is interesting to notice the fact that, most of the times, the funerary discoveries of Bistreț-Ișalnița type are situated in the same places where there were before Gârla Mare type necropolises. Unfortunately, most of the materials that

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 40-47.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 44 next; notice on the map from fig. 36 the author's hesitations as regarding the assigning of some sites, especially those from Vâlcea County, to this cultural group.

³⁶ S. Lazăr, *Bistreț Ișalnița Type Discoveries in Oltenia*, in "Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane «C.S. Nicolăescu Ploșșor»", 12, 2011, pp. 48-55.

³⁷ Gh. Popilian, *Un nouvel aspect de la fine de l'âge du bronze en Olténie*, in "Actes du VII^e Congrès International UISPP", Prague 21-27 août 1966 (1970), pp. 733-735, fig. 1.

³⁸ S. Morintz, *op. cit.*, p. 65, fig. 19/4.

³⁹ S. Morintz, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-61; B. Hänsel, *op. cit.*, p. 101 next.

⁴⁰ I. Chicideanu, *op. cit.*, p. 40 next, followed then by most of the researchers; A. László, in *Istoria României*, vol I, (ed. II), Bucharest, Enciclopedic Publishing, 2010, p. 313.

are illustrated in literature come, either from isolated discoveries or vessels, most kept in fragments.

The discoveries from Cârna “Ostrovogania” and Plosca, constitute now the only certain situations that can be regarded a starting point. Here, in the perimeter of the both Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare type necropolises, was identified for each a small group of tombs of which ceramic inventory presented specific forms different from those met in the majority tombs (at Cârna “Ostrovogania”, 9 from 69 tombs) and that, in few cases, superposed stratigraphically the Gârla Mare type tombs⁴¹. Similar situations are attested in Serbia, along the Danube, in the Clisură area (Korbovo “Pesak” and Vajuga-“Pesak”) and Bulgaria (Orsoja).

We should also notice that the number of Bistreț-Ișalnița type tombs from the cited necropolises is much more reduced as confronted to the one from the Gârla Mare period tombs. This fact might suggest a short period of time when this group developed, but such a conclusion is not mandatory⁴². In the same time, the fact that it isn't yet known any necropolis that can be attributed certainly *only* to the Bistreț-Ișalnița group, this type being always discovered in the area of the Gârla Mare necropolises (even if, in some cases, are disposed in separate group, as in the circumstances from Beograd “Karaburma”)⁴³, it proves more likely the tight connection, undoubtedly, with the Gârla Mare culture necropolises and the further on practicing, by the same communities, of the anterior funerary customs. No matter how much we take into account the influences that came from the western side (we are referring here to the group Cruceni-Belegiș), it is obvious that the mentioned discoveries constitute the organic evolution in the forms of the Gârla Mare culture and, implicitly, of the funerary practices specific for those communities (the cremation remains the exclusively practiced rite).

The only sites that had the characteristics of a settlement in which it seems that could be noticed this evolution of the material culture are those from Balej (four successive deposits) and Ghidici⁴⁴ (the dwellings no. 2 and 9 were attributed to the cultural aspect that we discuss here). But we must bring forward the fact that the discovery from Bulgaria, because the lack of details in the preliminary reports, remains still uncertain.

⁴¹ M. Șandor-Chicideanu, *op. cit.*, p. 223 and especially pp. 262-297; the researches from Plosca “Cabana de metal” have been only partially published (*Ibidem*, p. 298-318); I. Motzoi-Chicideanu, *Obiceiuri funerare în epoca bronzului la Dunărea Mijlocie și Inferioară*, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing, 2011, vol. I.

⁴² I. Chicideanu, *op. cit.*, p. 43 and M. Șandor-Chicideanu, *op. cit.*, p. 209 next appreciates its duration to about a century (the 13th century at I. Chicideanu and about 1250/1200-1100 a. Chr. at Șandor-Chicideanu).

⁴³ J. Todorović, *Praistoriska Karaburma II*, Beograd, 1977.

⁴⁴ S. Lazăr, *Sfârșitul epocii bronzului și începutul epocii fierului în sud-vestul României*, Craiova, Universitaria Publishing, 2011, pp. 225-228.

