

# IDENTITY LANDMARK: ARCHEOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE, TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND SOCIAL BIOGRAPHY

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SETTLEMENTS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE IRON AGE IN OLTENIA\*

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**Abstract:** First Iron Age it seems that we assist at the disappearing of vast settlements, with several levels of habitation. This fact could be explained although the climatic changes happened on the whole continent. Achieving a symbiosis between the climatic conditions, the specific of rural economy, intercommunity or distant changes, the necessity of creating some fortification systems and the existence of some power centers, some religious practices thus it is defined the character of the habitat of the discussed period.

There are few known examples of settlements in Oltenia, that have more levels of habitation and these are usually in the areas privileged with access at natural resources like the Danube's river meadow. The hallstadian settlement from Ghidici was the only one in which two levels of dwelling belonging to the First Iron Age could be observed.

**Keywords:** First Iron Age, Oltenia, hallstadian settlement, the fortified settlements.

The material culture of Early Hallstatt in Oltenia is characterized in the first stage of the ceramic decorated with grooves; could be dated, in absolute chronology, in the 12<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries B. C. The second stage, with printed and incised ceramics, correlates with the dating of the Insula Banului group and the Gornea-Kalakača between the 10<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries B. C., a period that could constitute the second phase of early Hallstatt and which could be followed in this area by ceramic type Basarabi.

Starting with the 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the fashion of the grooved vessels is extending, being present both in Oltenia and in the most part of the Carpathian – Danube space. As regarding its origin, the opinions are divided: some researchers consider the phenomenon as having western origin, the

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grooved pottery entering on the Danube's course in Banat and Oltenia<sup>1</sup>; others think that the changing of decoration was more likely a change of fashion. It seems that the apparition of the new pottery ornamenting technique doesn't necessary lead to an ethnic contribution; anyway, the determinations of such a change or innovation are for now hard to be perceived.

The phenomenon regarding the apparition of the grooved pottery can be actually positioned in the evolution of the material culture, specific for the Late Bronze. The generalization of the grooved decoration on the ceramics from the fine category is conventionally considered to represent the beginning of the Iron Age, the Vârtoș culture<sup>2</sup>.

The defining traits for what we call here the Vârtoș culture were established on the ceramic material in the tumuli from the eponym locality<sup>3</sup> and of the ceramic fragments discovered in the sites from around them. It is about a black ceramics, wellpolished and quite properly burned, connected with a certain forms repertoire, such is the large bitruncated vessel (many of them functioned as urns), decorated with oblique grooves and wide at the body, the porringer with the edge bended to the inside, decorated with grooves, the double vessel (salt cellar type), the pedestalled vessel (cup), both decorated inside with grooves, sometimes disposed in garlands, etc. or the "oven" vessel (*Backwanne* and *Pyraunos*). The decoration was generally realized either with oblique grooves, placed on the body, or with narrow grooves, disposed in horizontal stripes or grouped in multiple arcades at the exterior and/or interior of the vessel. Along with the groove, we meet some incised girdles and stripes, filled with pricks and prominences-holdings, wide or sharp.

The first mentions about the materials from Vârtoș have been made in an article from 1922, by C.S. Nicolăescu Ploșor<sup>4</sup>, where were presented the researches made around the localities Vârtoș and Ploșor, Dolj County, where had been discovered several tumular tombs and "dwellings".

Later, Dumitru Berciu was referring to the discoveries from Vârtoș and Ploșor, presenting them first as "settlements" and then as "tumular tombs" around them. The author related that in a settlement (Fig. VI) was dug a mound with "a hut, of which oval plan, with the two diameters of 4.75 and 3.70 m (...). The entrance was on the eastern side and the floor of the hut was built directly on the

<sup>1</sup> I. Chicideanu, *Die Frühthrakische Kultur. Zur Bronzezeit in Sudwest Rumänien*, in "Dacia", NS, 30, 1986, 1–2, pp. 40–47.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Vârtoș culture", extended in order to include all the ceramic materials decorated with grooves and realized in the technique mentioned before, might seem inappropriate for a modern approach of the notion of *archaeological culture*. We have shortly discussed in a paper that appeared not long ago. This name too, and all the names given in the traditional archaeology to the cultures defined only by the pottery realized through forms, technique and specific decorative motifs, represent only a convention that we use here. The meaning Vârtoș "culture" can be considered similar to that of Gáva "culture".

<sup>3</sup> D. Berciu, *Arheologia preistorică a Olteniei*, Craiova, 1939, p. 239 next.

<sup>4</sup> S. Lazăr, *Sfârșitul epocii bronzului și începutul epocii fierului în sud-vestul României*, Craiova, Universitaria Publishing, 2011, p. 49.

loess, being beaten and in some places besmeared with clay. On the edges had been identified traces of poles that might have constituted the frame of this modest hut (...)"'. "To the north was the hearth of beaten earth, with the diameter of  $0.50 \times 0.40$  m, having the edges a few raised". In such a hut had been found "ceramic fragment for the household use, animal bones, fragmentary net weights, grinding mill stones"<sup>5</sup> and "an eared bronze needle"<sup>6</sup>.

During the Iron Age is observed, as a habitat's characteristic, the existence of some small and short period habitations. Most of the sites mentioned as settlements, are presented actually under the form of familiar establishment groups situated at considerable distances one from another. There are few known examples of settlements in Oltenia, from the Early Bronze or the Late Hallstatt period, that have more levels of habitation and these are usually in the areas privileged with access at natural resources like the Danube's river meadow.

A stratigraphic situation can be seen in the south of Oltenia, at Ghidici<sup>7</sup>, Dolj County. At six km south from the village Ghidici, between the dunes of sand and the Danube, is the point "Balta Țarovei I" where there had been dug several dwellings (Fig. I). Six of them belonged to the settlement Gârla Mare (the Bronze Age), two of them were considered the Bistreț-Ișalnița type (the Bronze Age) and four were attributed to the Iron Age: three dwellings of Vârtop type and the dwellings no. 12 to the Basarabi culture.

The best kept of the hallshtatian dwellings was proved to be dwelling number 7 (Fig. II) with the dimensions of  $9 \times 10$  m, that appeared at the dimension of 0.90–1.20 m. Its outline of a rectangular form was given by an adobe belt 1–1.25 m wide, representing the traces of the walls collapsed apparently after a fire. This way we could clearly delimitate the form, the dimension and the N–S orientation of the dwelling that had the entrance towards south. The floor made from sand was slightly leaned from north to south, the level difference being of 0,30 m. The fireplace had a circular form, the diameter of 1m and it was approximate in the middle of the dwelling, it was approximate 0,20 m higher then the floor and it had an edge of 6 cm. Around the firehouse were 2 groups of broken pots and in the western and eastern corners were 20 big pyramidal shaped clay weights, together with numerous clay balls, ceramic fragments and a lot of coal.

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<sup>5</sup> D. Berciu, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–145.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, fig. 181/1.

<sup>7</sup> M. Nica, *Locuințele de tip Gârla Mare și Hallsattiene descoperite în așezările de la Ghidici*, in "Thraco-Dacica", no. 12, 1987, pp. 16–38; Idem, *Câteva date despre necropola și locuințele din așezările hallstattiene timpurii de la Ghidici, punctul "Balta Țarova" – județul Dolj*, in "Cercetări arheologice în aria nord-tracă", vol. 1, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 236; M. Nica, S. Lazăr, *Locuințele Hallstattiene descoperite la Ghidici*, in "Cercetări arheologice în aria nord tracă", vol. 2, București, 1997, pp. 87–112; S. Lazăr, *Contribuții la repertoriul arheologic al jud. Dolj*, in "Arhivele Olteniei", SN, no. 14, 1999, pp. 19–37; Idem, *Sfârșitul epocii bronzului și începutul epocii fierului în sud-vestul României*, Editura Universitaria, Craiova, 2011, pp. 225–228.

The dwelling number 8 (Fig. III) had a rectangular form, north-south orientated and with the dimensions of  $7.50 \times 4$  m. Close to the west wall the shoe horse shaped oven of  $0.80 \times 0.80$  was placed, its arch was preserved on a 0.02 m height. Nearby 3 grindings and few Vârtoş type ceramic fragments were found.

The dwelling number 10 (Fig. IV) is similar in shape and dimension with number 7 dwelling but it has a very poor inventory.

At less then 200 m from the previously described dwellings, in a place called Balta Țarova II, a new hallshtatian dwelling (Fig. V) have been dogged out. The floor was preserved only on a  $2,60 \times 2$  m surface and had the aspect of a seriously cracked fireplace crust, the rest being destroyed by the natural causes that disturbed the sand dune. The fireplace, taking into account the burn traces, was probably round and it was conserved on a  $1 \times 1,50$  m surface. In the settlement was found pottery, spindle-whorls, a bronze 8.5 cm long knife and a bronze unadorned needle.

Pottery similar was also discovered at Călugăreni, Gorj County, Portărești, Ghidici, Știubei Dolj County, but also in many other sites.

At Călugăreni, Gorj County<sup>8</sup>, were discovered black ceramic fragments that, through the manufacturing technique and the decorative motifs, have analogies with the Vârtoş-Susani type materials. Among the forms we can mention – large vessel with truncated neck, wide edge, turned-up and sometimes grinded. The decoration is made of narrow grooves disposed in horizontal stripes under the edge or in garlands on the neck and short, wide grooves, placed obliquely on the body. Another form is the porringer with the edge arched to the inside, decorated with oblique grooved without decoration. Among the common use pottery we cite the vessels with thick sides and straight opening, decorated with alveolated girdles.

The First Iron Age (Hallstatt), highly represented by the Valley of Danube and the Oltenian Plain, was certificated in the studied region. Traces of dwelling from this region were been discovered at Bistret, Plosca, Galiciuica and in the lakes area at Bistret, Carna, Nasta, Nedeia (where were made hydrotechnical works), where were identified traces of Hallstattian settlements. Also, in the perimeter of the localities Basarabi, Carna, Hunia, Bistret, Booveni (commune Dranic) were discovered fragments of Hallstattian grooved pottery, specific for this period. Grooved ceramics of Vârtoş type was discovered in about 70 localities in the studied area<sup>9</sup>.

The second stage of the Early Hallstatt in the north of the Danube is characterized through the diffusing of some new influences from the Balkans,

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<sup>8</sup> I. Chicideanu, P. Gherghe, *Săpăturile arheologice de la Călugăreni (jud. Gorj)*, in “Materiale și cercetări arheologice”, Sesiunea XV de rapoarte, Braşov (1981), Bucharest, 1983, pp. 103–107; S. Lazăr, *Cultura Vârtoş în Oltenia*, Craiova, Fundația Scrisul Românesc Publishing, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> S. Lazăr, *Sfârșitul epocii bronzului și începutul epocii fierului în sud-vestul României*, Craiova, Editura Publishing, 2011, pp. 61–62.

arrived from the Marița's basin, from the area of Pšeničevo and Čepina cultural groups. In the Danube area, in Dobrogea and in Moldova, they appear in discoveries with imprinted ceramics, of Babadag and Cozia – Brad type and in our studied area through and Insula Banului type pottery. For this phenomenon that took place sometimes in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, once with the late period of the proto – geometric, we have in this space few points related to a definite chronology: the pyxis – shaped vessel from Babadag and the fibulae from Brad that we have analyzed in the chapter dedicated to the chronology and that corresponds with the above dating. These influences are evident in the south of Transylvania at Tilișca<sup>10</sup>, Brașov – “Pățitel”<sup>11</sup>, etc.

For Oltenia and Banat we have no certain landmarks regarding the absolute chronology, but are obvious the similarities between the Insula Banului type pottery and the south Danube imprinted pottery. On the other side, the Gornea – Kalakača type pottery is different by that of Insula Banului type, through the style in which are rendered the imprinted motifs. The Gornea – Kalakača type pottery was identified especially in the inferior basins of Drava and Sava, in Srem, but also in the Morava basin end in Banat<sup>12</sup>. These two cultural groups have a spreading area that isn't superposed but partially; the Gornea – Kalakača type discoveries from Serbia are classified according to the indications from the specialized literature. The Insula Banului type pottery is present especially in the Timok basin, but it quite frequently present in the Great Morava basin too. The Gornea – Kalakača type ceramics was lately also sporadically attested in the south – west of Oltenia<sup>13</sup>. The chronological connection between them is not yet known enough. The only almost clear situation is that from Gornea, Caraș – Severin County, on the Danube and where, after the researches made in four neighboring settlements, situated in a small area of only few square kilometers, could be made some stratigraphic observations too<sup>14</sup>.

On the Insula Banului<sup>15</sup> archaeological excavations have found more dwellings (Figs. VII–IX), which show successive reconstructions, with which pits were found. The dwellings, almost all deep in the ground, were round, oval or rectangular with rounded corners, and after digging the authors, “the circular shape

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<sup>10</sup> N. Lupu, *Tilișca. Așezările arheologice de pe Cățanaș*, Bucharest, 1989, pp. 57 next, sketch 4/2,7.

<sup>11</sup> A.D. Alexandrescu, I. Pop, *Sondajele de la Brașov Pățitel*, in “Materiale”, no. 9, 1970, pp. 160–165.

<sup>12</sup> M. Gumă, *Câteva observații asupra grupului Bosut*, in “SCIVA”, tom 32, no. 1, 1981, pp. 43–66; M. Jevtić, *Keramika strarijeg gvozdenog doba na centralno Balkanskom području*, Beograd, 1983.

<sup>13</sup> G. Crăciunescu, *La culture Basarabi dans le sud-ouest de l'Oltenie*, in “Der Basarabi-Komplex in Mittel-und Südost Europa”. Kolloquium in Drobeta-Turnu Severin 1996, București, 1996, pp. 79–92, sketch 8 (map); Idem, *Date noi cu privire la geneza și evoluția culturii Verbicioara*, in “Drobeta”, no. 7, 1996, pp. 79 and next.

<sup>14</sup> M. Gumă, *Civilizația primei epoci a fierului în sud-vestul României*, 1993, pp. 169–203, fig. 7.

<sup>15</sup> S. Morintz, P. Roman, *Un grup hallstattian timpuriu în sud-vestul României – Insula Banului*, in “SCIV”, tom 20, no. 3, 1969, pp. 393–423.

of the quarries of the dwellings represents a newer stage in relation to the rectangular shape”. The dwellings date back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century B. C.

The iron flanged axe appeared in sector B of the settlement on Insula Banului, where ceramics predominates. Bronze bracelet with semi – circular section, bold-coated, embossed with W – shaped engraved lines, was found in section A, which contains ceramics, especially the printer and incised. So, we can reconsider the internal chronology of of the settlement from Insula Banului<sup>16</sup>.

In the First Iron Age it seems that we assist at the disappearing of vast settlements, with several levels of habitation. This fact could be explained although the climatic changes happened on the whole continent. There are few known examples of settlements in Oltenia, that have more levels of habitation and these are usually in the areas privileged with access at natural resources like the Danube’s river meadow.

In the same period, we find fortresses strengthened with a defence vallum as those in Transylvania<sup>17</sup> or that from Popești, jud. Giurgiu<sup>18</sup>. In Oltenia such fortresses were researched at Portărești, Dolj district<sup>19</sup>, Măru, Gorj district and Grădiștea, Vâlcea district<sup>20</sup>. They are all situated on a higher relief, on circular surfaces with the diameter between 80 and 170 m and are defended with an earth vallum, that from Portărești also having a ditch. Excepting that from Măru, which had two levels of dwelling (Verbicioara și Vârtop), the other two have only one level, from the Early Hallstatt period. About the Portărești settlement, (better researched), we know that it had a layer of culture thick of 0.30 – 0.40m, fact that doesn’t necessarily stands for an intense dwelling.

The other Hallstattiene fortresses mentioned in the archaeological literature a long time ago (Galicea Mare, Galiciuica, Dobridor, Ghercești, from Dolj district)<sup>21</sup> and Dobrești<sup>22</sup>, weren’t dogged or researched previously, and the few information

<sup>16</sup> S. Morintz, P. Roman, *op. cit.*, pp. 393–423; B. Hänsel, *Beiträge zur Regionalen und Chronologischen Gliederung der älteren Hallstattzeit an der unteren Donau*, Bonn, 1976, pp. 151 next; A. Vulpe, *Die Kurzschwerter, Dolche und Streitmesser der Hallstattzeit in Rumänien*, PBF, Abteilung 6, Band 9, München, C.H. Becksche Publishing House, 1990, pp. 104–105.

<sup>17</sup> V. Vasiliev, *Fortifications de refuge et etablissement fortifie du premier age du fer en Transylvanie*, Bucharest, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> A. Vulpe, *50 years of systematic archaeological excavations at the pre – and protohistoric site at Popești*, in “Dacia”, NS, no. 48–49, 2004–2005, p. 19; N. Palincaș, *Social Status and Gender Relations in Late Bronze Age Popești. A Plea for the Introduction of New Approaches in Romanian Archaeology*, “Dacia”, NS, no. 48–49, 2004–2005, pp. 44 and the next.

<sup>19</sup> C. M. Tăulea, *Cercetări în așezarea hallstattiană timpurie de la Portărești, jud. Dolj*, in “Thraco-Dacica”, no. 3, 1982, p. 126 and the next.

<sup>20</sup> F. Marinescu, *Cercetări din cetatea Hallstattiană de la Grădiștea, județul Vâlcea*, in “Studii și Materiale de Istorie Militară”, 1981–1982, p. 47 and the next.

<sup>21</sup> D. Berci, *op. cit.*, p. 143; Idem, *Șantierul arheologic de la Verbicioara Dolj*, in “SCIV”, no. 1, 1950, p. 106.

<sup>22</sup> S. Lazăr, *Sfârșitul epocii bronzului și începutul epocii fierului în sud-vestul României*, Craiova, Universitaria Publishing, 2011, p. 128.

initially known, having the character of some shallow researches, doesn't give us sufficient data to analyze.

At Portărești, Dolj district, was dogged a settlement containing pottery very similar with the Vârtop type. The settlement occupies an approximate round shape plateau with the diameter of almost 170 m. It is defended by an earth made vallum wide of 7.50 – 8 m and a ditch. Although in the moment of the diggings the earth vallum was flat, the archaeologist estimates that his height was 2.50 m up to the ancient stepping level and 4,50 m up to the bottom of the ditch. The vallum was made from a basis of calcareous earth, well rammed, having above, along it, three rows of stones and grit stones pieces, covered with clay containing calcareous fragments. In the exterior part, the vallum descends towards the funnel shaped ditch, wide of 17 m and deep of 1.93 m up to the ancient yard.

The dwellings were found in the north part of the plateau. Besides the pottery, there have been discovered a fragment of a bronze bracelet and two needles, one fragmentary and the other with the head rolled (the Rollennadel type). The last one determined the authors of the digging to date the settlement in the A Hallstatt period.

About the role of the fortified settlements some specification must be made. In the past was accentuated their defensive role and was neglected another function – that representing the social prestige. Such a function was presumed to have the fortification from Popești, Giurgiu district, as A. Vulpe said<sup>23</sup>. The apparition of the defended fortresses at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, wide across the Central and South – West Europe, was interpreted as a tendency of emphasising for the chief of the community<sup>24</sup>. The function of representing social prestige also has some objects<sup>25</sup> discovered in the settlements. “Les produits en bronze étaient devenus abondants, fonctionnellement et stylistiquement très varié. Il n'est pas indifférent de souligner que les outils métallique, qui avaient alors pris une place importante dans tous les secteurs de la productions, ne pouvaient être fabriqués sans le concours des élites; ce qui pourrait induire un début de contrôle partiel sur l'économie de subsistance de la part d'une instance supra – locale. Au début de l'Age du fer, la forme de pouvoir politique ne change pas très sensiblement... Des armes et des parures en fer, du sel en grosses quantités, des salaisons et des textiles de luxe font maintenant partie de biens de prestige en circulation”<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> A. Vulpe, *op. cit.*, p. 19; N. Palincaș, *Social Status and Gender Relation in Late Bronze Age Popești. A Plea for the Introduction of New Approaches in Romanian Archaeology*, in “Dacia”, no. 48–49, 2004–2005, p. 44 and the next.

<sup>24</sup> P. Burn, *La genèse de l'état: les apports de l'archéologie*, in “Les princes de la protohistoire et l'émergence de l'état”, 1999, p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> In the same manner were interpreted some ritual deposits such as the bronze hoard, specially put at the entrance of the Kronach fortress, from the Superior Franconia. Quoted by P. Schauer, *Stand und Aufgaben der Urnenfelderforschung in Süddeutschland*, in “Beiträge zur Urnenfelderzeit nördlich und südlich der Alpen, Monographien”, RGZM, Bd. 35, Bonn 1995, p. 165, fig. 41.

<sup>26</sup> P. Burn, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

The fact that they don't have only a defensive role against the invaders is suggested also by the anthropological studies. M. Eliade emphasised that "the defensive systems of the settlements and the fortresses had a magic character at first: these systems made of ditches, labyrinths, defensive vallum, were conceived to stop rather the entrance of the demons and of the death's souls than the human invasions ... the walls of the fortresses were assigned through rituals to serve as a bound against the demon, disease or death. As a matter of fact, in the symbolic thought, the human – enemy is naturally compared with the Demon and with Death. Because the result of any kind of attack, either demonic or military is the same: the destruction, the annihilation, the death"<sup>27</sup>.

The archaeological documents from the present stage of the researches, with all the lacks, allow us to observe that, in the same time with the existence of a "spreading" habitat, similar to that of the communities that have as the main mean of existence the grazing, are now present the reinforced fortresses that, along with the proliferation of some fatuous habits (the tumuli from Susani and Lăpuș), denote the existence of some leaders, interested in the affirmation and the maintaining of the social prestige.

It is obviously that the analysis of the dwelling space must be done in tight connection with the funerary space, taking into account the totality of the economical practices regarding the capitalisation of the natural and environmental adapting resources, but also the valorisation of some symbolic practices.

Even though we can only imagine the entire mythical structure which could have represented the basis of the human settlement that, through the archeologically observed traces, could offer information related to the social and economic structure of communities. Achieving a symbiosis between the climatic conditions, the specific of rural economy, intercommunity or distant changes, the necessity of creating some fortification systems and the existence of some power centers, some religious practices thus it is defined the character of the habitat of the discussed period.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Prehistoric settlements can be found in different places but in most of the cases on rivers courses near springs with drinking water especially on lower or middle terraces. Both the demographic development and the sedentary character of the communities, first of all in places adjusted to human life and then in placements permitting the co-inhabitation of many coherent groups.

But, it is actually hard to say the period of dwelling from a settlement, especially in our studied period. Unlike the houses made of unburned bricks from

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<sup>27</sup> M. Eliade, *Sacrul și profanul*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing, 2000, p. 40; Idem, *Tratatul de istorie a religiilor*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing, 1992, p. 341.



the Neolithic tells that most of the times had been rebuilt during a generation, the houses with the oak girder walls can last for many generations. The thick well – preserved oak or beech tree girders were frequently reused as a building material for a new house, fact noticed from the ethnographic point of view in the areas where the wood was the only or the main building material, including in the Carpathian – Danube area. It is very probable that the situation to be the same for the dwellings in the hill and mountain zones from the end of the Bronze Age and, of course, in the case of the habitat from the Vârtope type grooved pottery.

If we approach this information through the cultural transformations sustained by the processual archaeology, then the situation might be very different from the interpretations many times presented by the historicist conceptions, such as the moving of some communities, their migration, etc. It is understandable that such types of dwellings built from wood, although had a long duration (sometimes several centuries), are hard to be archaeologically found and the period of time that we discuss can attest the presence in this territory of a complex activity of those communities. This is the explanation for the situation that in the actual stage of information the attesting of some dwelling type constructions is due especially to the digging of a deep foundation (the case of the hut) or the fireplaces and the cremated deposits.

The material culture elements, in our case, the ceramic vessels, belong to the social practice system. As manifestations of some symbolic practices, they are the bearers of certain significations for which's understanding it is important to analyze the statute of this ceramics in the funerary space but also in the inhabited place<sup>28</sup> and the relations that exist between the two fields.

In the Late Bronze period and especially in the First Iron Age it seems that we assist at the disappearing of vast settlements, with several levels of habitation. This fact could be explained although the climatic changes happened on the whole continent. Based on the palinological, pedological and archeozoological researches, made especially in the areas close to the Carpatho – Danubian zone, has been observed the installation of a period of cold and gradually dryer climate<sup>29</sup>. A. Vulpe presumed that this climate conditions favoured the growth of the pastoral activities, phenomenon with direct implications on the type of the habitat<sup>30</sup>.

The settlements dated in the Late Bronze, respectively the beginning of the Iron Age (what in Central Europe corresponds to the UFZ period) have, most of them, as we have already mentioned, a single layer of culture that apparently leads to the assumption that they had been dwelled for a short period of time. This situation is met at the Danube and around the ponds or small – islands near the

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<sup>28</sup> M. Eliade, *Sacral și profanul*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing, 2000, p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> M. Tomescu, *Holocenul, date cronologice și climatice*, in “Cercetări arheologice MNIR”, 11, pp. 235–270; A. Vulpe, *Problema scitică în România*, in “Identitate națională și spirit European”, 2003, pp. 122–123.

<sup>30</sup> A. Vulpe, *op. cit.* pp. 123–124.

river, where are Gârla Mare and Bistreț Ișalnița type settlements and in the hilly and piedmont area where is a level of dwelling is again “thin” from the stratigraphic point of view.

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- Pl. VIII: Insula Banului, The Iron Age dwelling – sector B (after S. Morintz, P. Roman)
- Pl. IX: Insula Banului, The Iron Age dwelling – sector B (after S. Morintz, P. Roman)

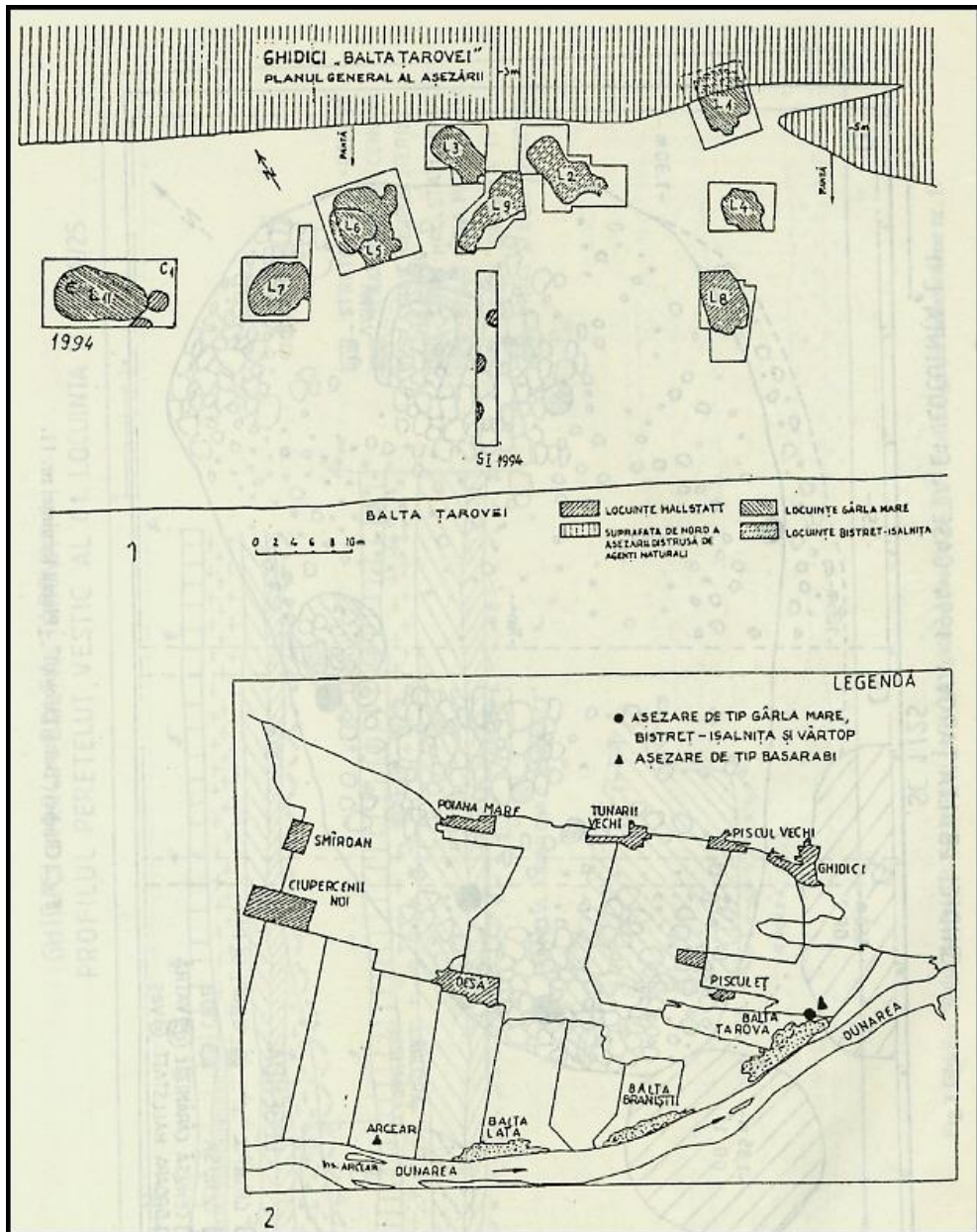


Fig. I. The settlement is at Ghidici, excavation plan..

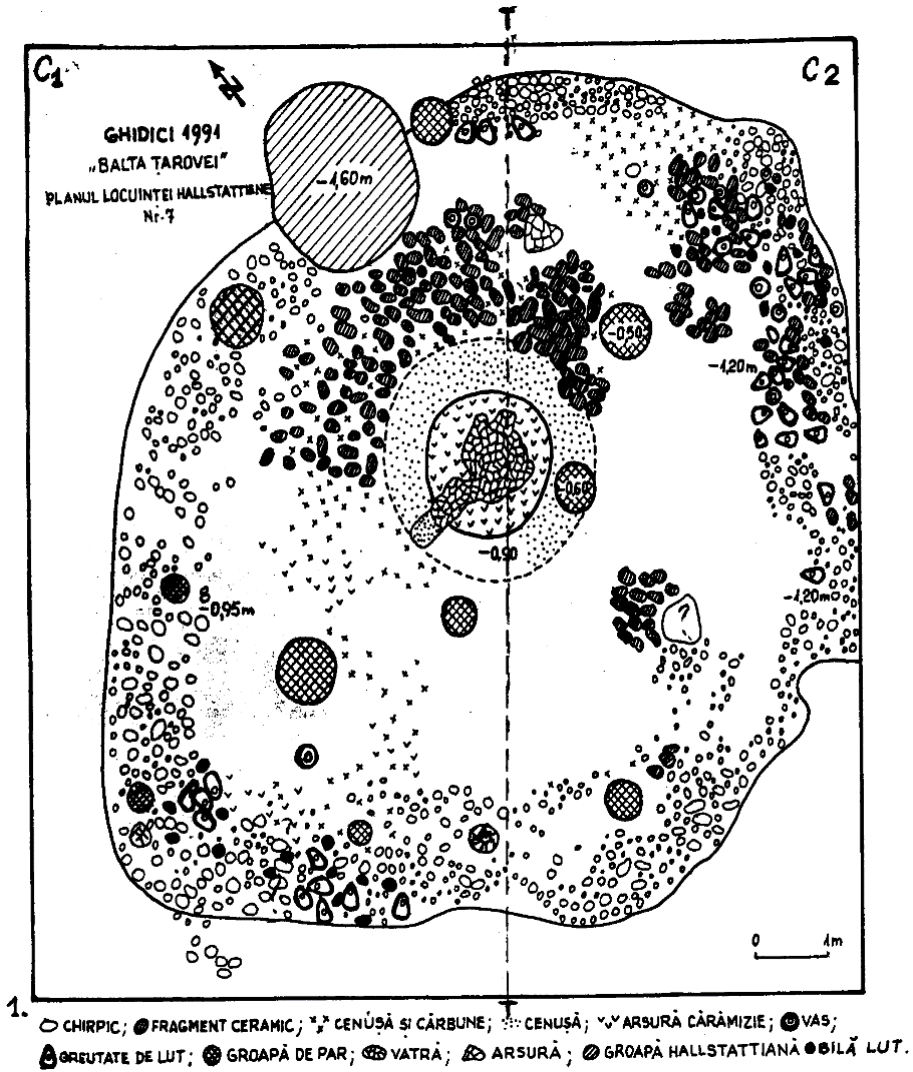


Fig. II. Settlement Ghidici – The Iron Age dwelling no. 7  
(personal excavation).

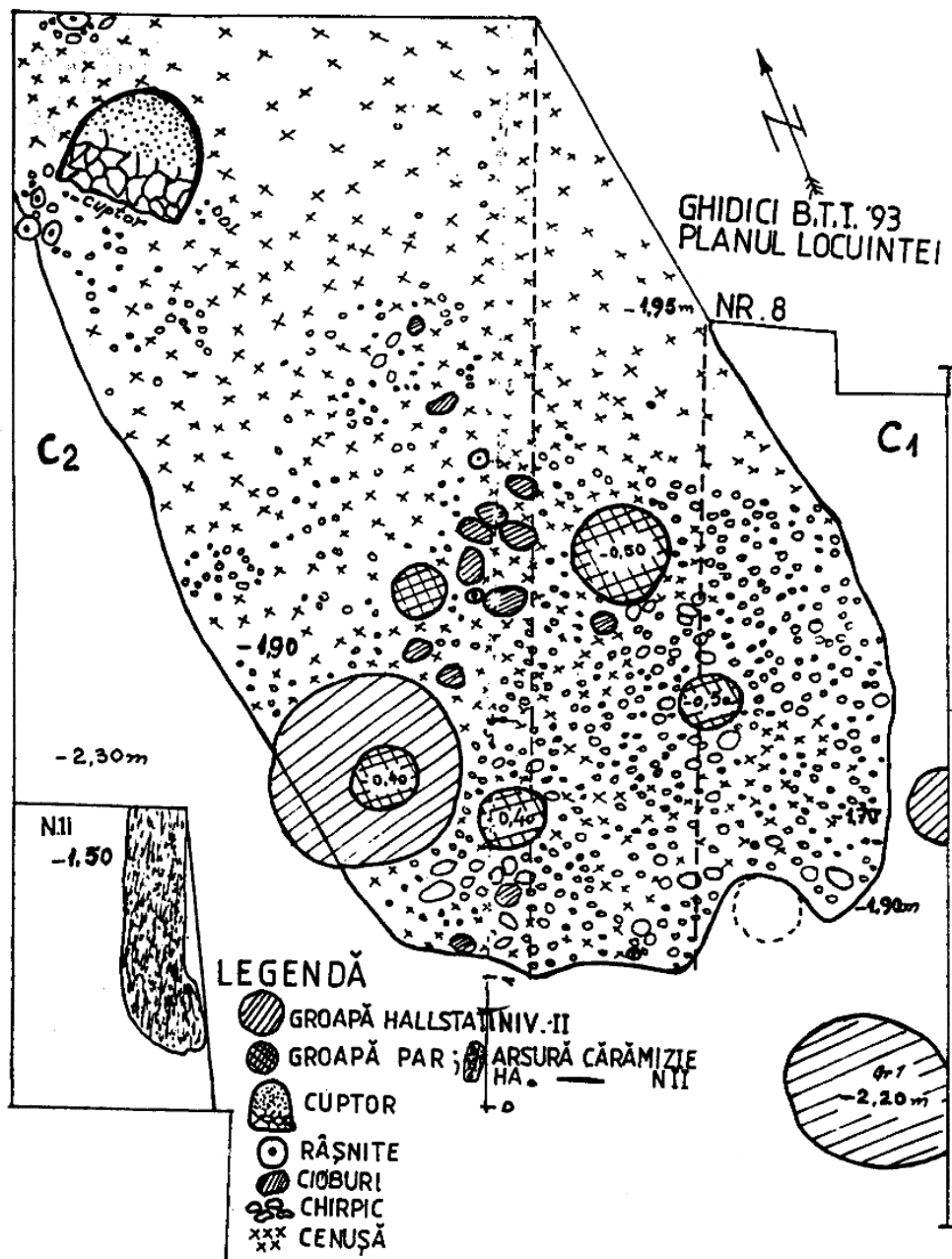
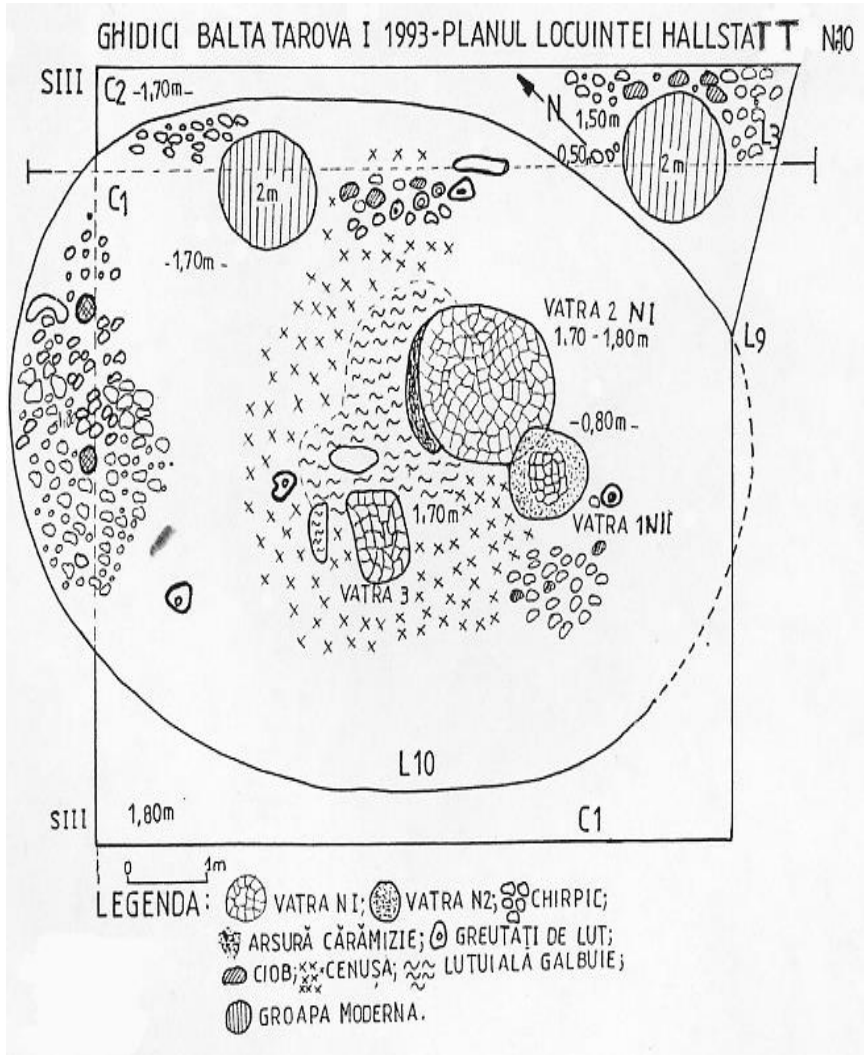


Fig. III. Settlement Ghidici – The Iron Age dwelling no. 8 (personal excavation).



**Fig. IV.** Settlement Ghidici – The Iron Age dwelling no. 10 (personal excavation).

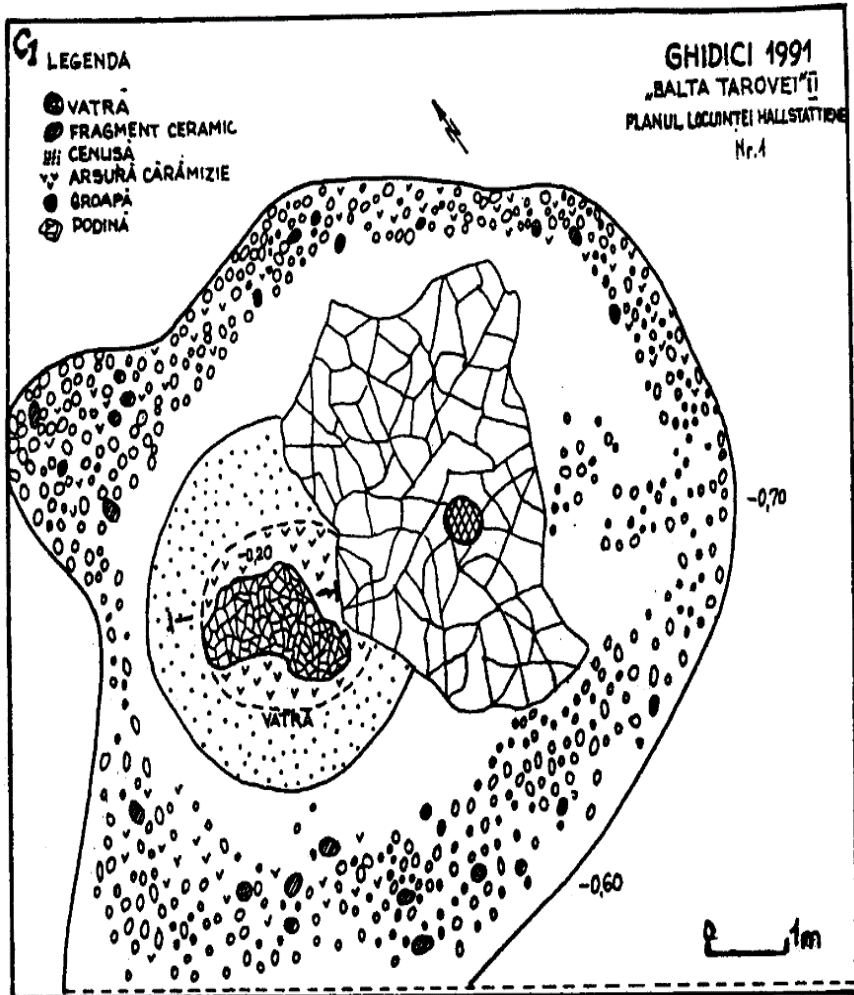


Fig. V. Settlement Ghidici, Balta Tarova II –  
 The Iron Age dwelling no. 1 (personal excavation).



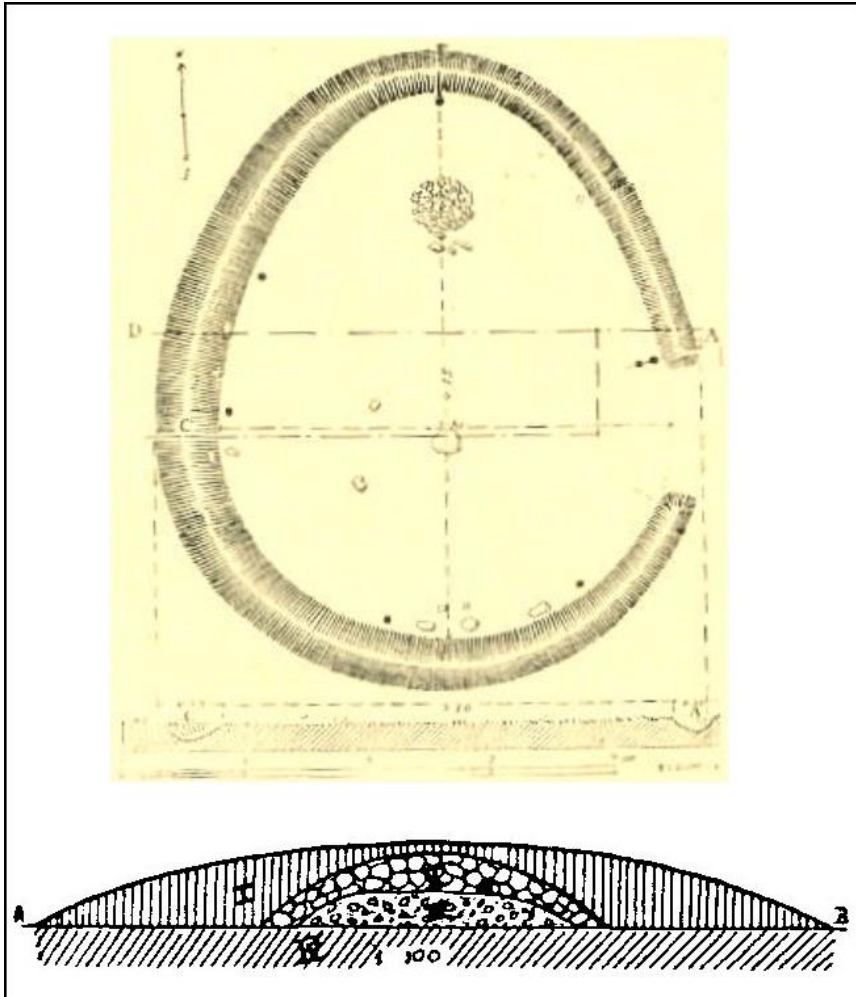
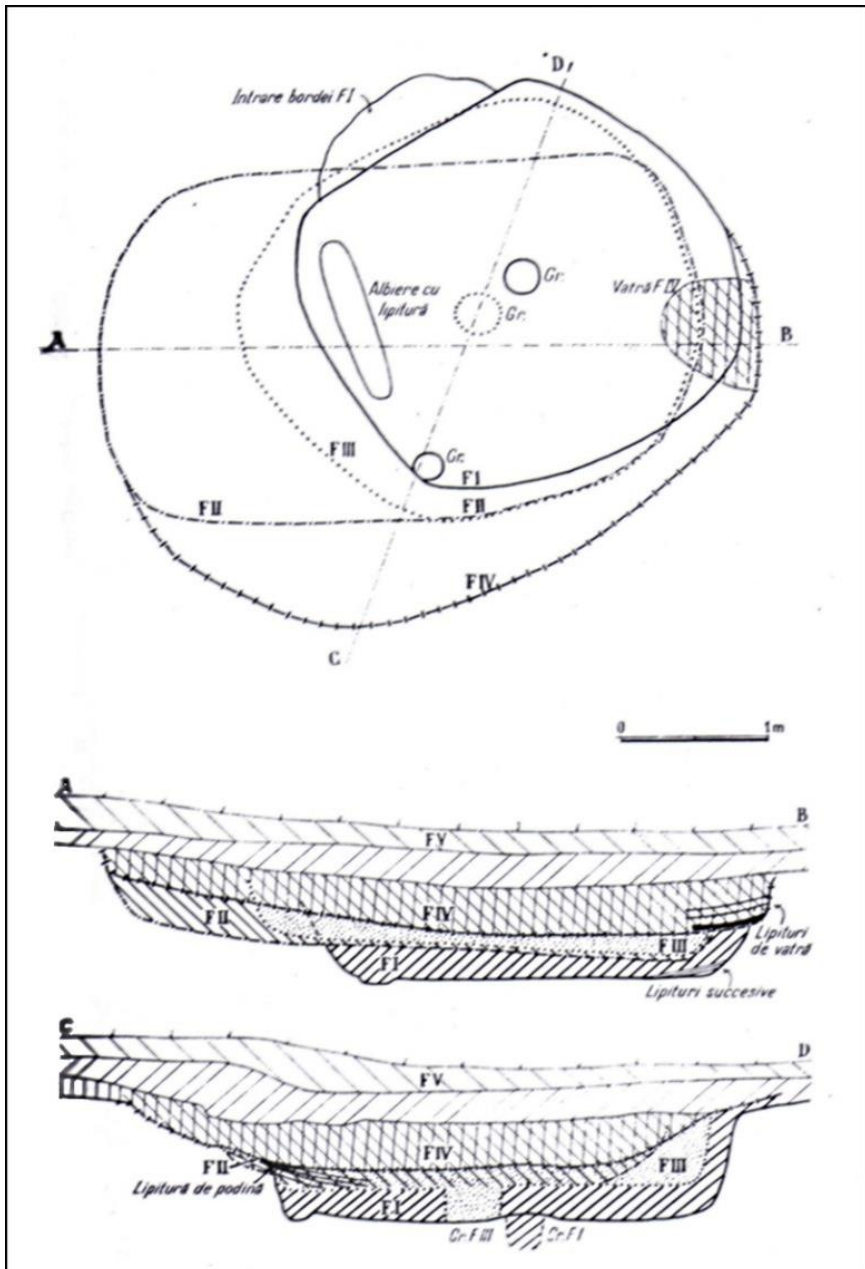
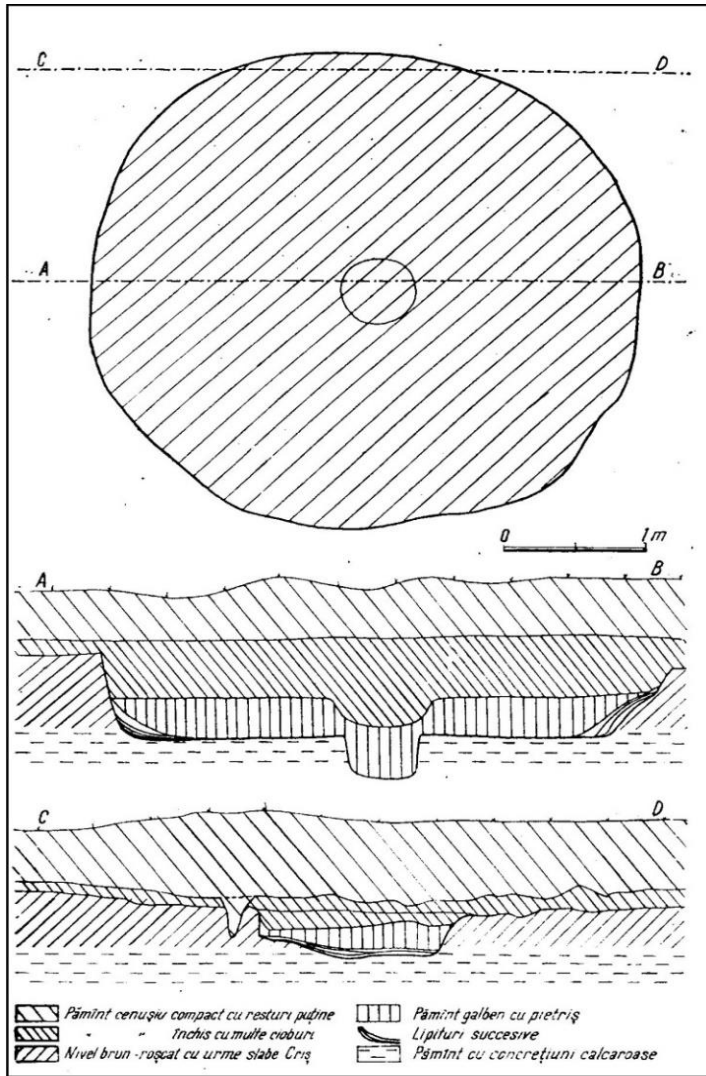


Fig. VI. Vârtop – The Iron Age dwelling (after D. Berciu).





**Fig.VII.** Insula Banului, The Iron Age dwelling - sector A (after S. Morintz, P. Roman).



**Fig. VIII.** Insula Banului, The Iron Age dwelling – sector B (after S. Morintz, P. Roman).

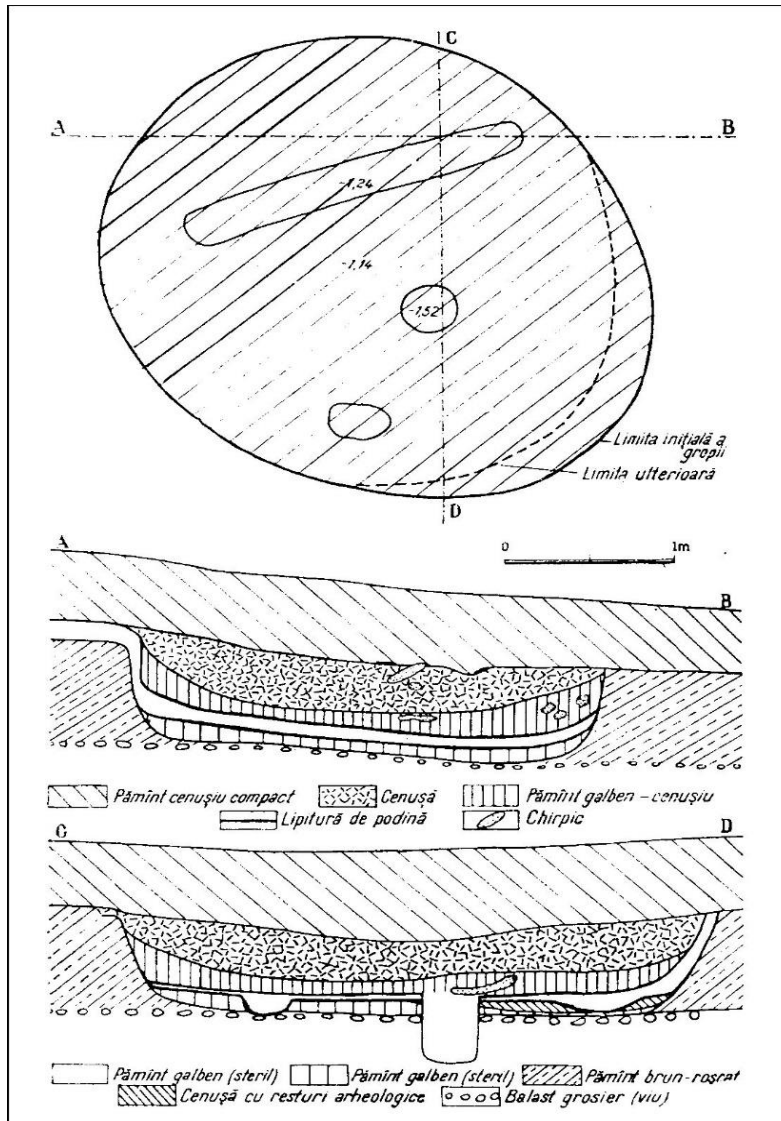


Fig. IX. Insula Banului, The Iron Age dwelling – sector B (after S. Morintz, P. Roman).