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**Volum omagial dedicat
domnului Vasile Moga,
cu ocazia împlinirii vârstei de 70 de ani**



Vasile Moga

NOTES ABOUT A MINIATURAL CLAY REPRESENTATION OF AN AXE WITH CROSSED ARMS FOUND AT OCNIȚA, VÂLCEA COUNTY

Ion TUȚULESCU
County Museum "Aurelian Sacerdoteanu" Vâlcea

Cuvinte cheie: așezare, topor, miniatură, simbol de putere, jucărie, Sălcuța IV.

Key words: settlement, axe, miniature, symbol of power, toy, Sălcuța IV.

In the archaeological research of the powerful Dacian dava from Buridava, it was discovered a piece that caught our attention; otherwise it is a piece made of clay, the imitation of an ax with crossed arms.

As it is known in the specialized literature, the stratigraphy of the site was different before setting of the Geto-Dacians in area¹. The archaeological researches conducted by the Institute of Archaeology "Vasile Pârvan" in collaboration with the History Museum of Vâlcea led to the discovery of remains belonging to different periods and civilizations:

- eneolithic: Sălcuța culture or the horizon of the pill handles;
- the transition period from the Eneolithic to the Bronze Age:

Coțofeni culture

- The Bronze Age: Glina and Verbicioara culture;
- The First Iron Age: Basarabi culture;
- The Second Iron Age: Geto-Dacian culture.

The coordinates of the site.

The miniature axe was discovered in 1981 in the zone „Cetatea 1”, section SA, the square 2, depth range - 1.80 to 2.00 m.

Description.

Nr. inv. = 221;

L = 9.9 cm;

l. maximum of the perforation = 2.9 cm;

The diameter of the gloving hole = 0.8 cm;

Weight = 60.93 gr.

The chestnut color piece was made of well kneaded clay, the burning being oxidizing. Also, the miniature axe is covered with a chestnut - colored verniss.

¹ The setting of the Geto-Dacians in the area resulted in changing partially the relief of the area due to extensive earthworks.

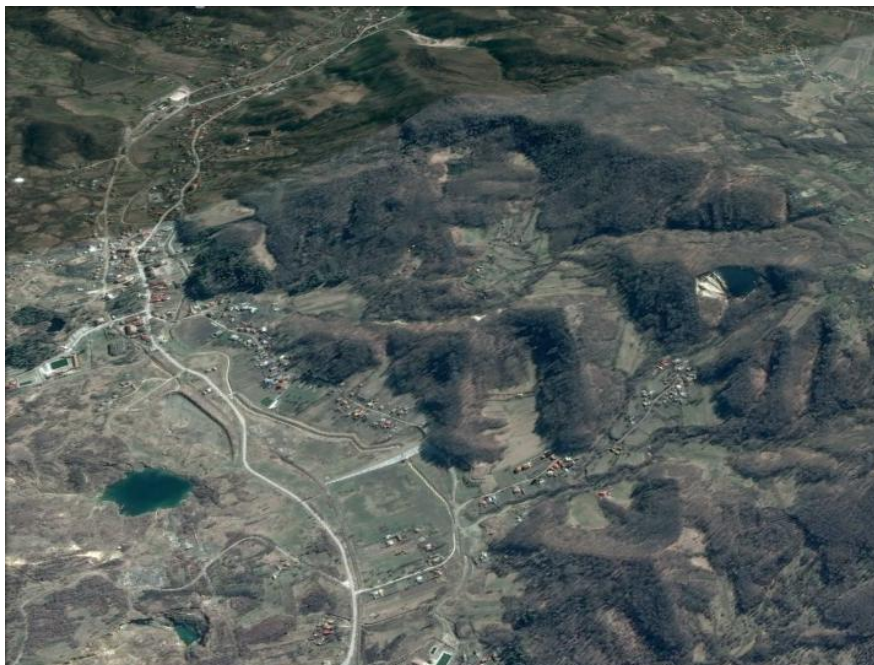


Fig. 1. The settlement from Ocnița - Dacian Buridava.

The apparition and the evolution of the miniature clay axes.

It should be noted the fact that the miniatural axes appear by precisely or schematically immitating on a small scale the lithic specimens and then the copper and bronze ones.

For Europe the earliest representations are emerging in the area of Suplacul de Barcău², Lengyel³ and Vinča (the late phase)⁴ cultures.

For the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area - the miniature clay models of axes begin to appear in area of Gumelnița culture, the aspect Stoicani-Aldeni, Cucuteni⁵, Sălcuța III or the horizon of the pill handles type Sălcuța IV-Herculane II-III⁶.

² Chmielewski 2014, p. 45-46.

³ Lengyel III.

⁴ The most interesting discovery in Vinca culture which refers to our topic is the set of Stubline-Crkvine where 43 statues have been identified and 11 miniature models of axes. Representations belong to phase D2.

⁵ For the pieces in the Cucuteni culture there are evolutionary established the sub-phases: A3-A4 (see Chmielewski 2014, p. 46).

⁶ Enea 2013, p. 94.



Fig. 2. Miniature representation from Ocnîța - Dacian Buridava.

Regarding the miniatural axes with crossed arms, similarities with our piece can be found in Oltenia at Ostrovul Corbului⁷, on the north-west side of the island⁸ close to the late Sălcuța settlement from the point „Botul Piscului”⁹, in the area of Cucuteni¹⁰ culture, but also from an unknown spot¹¹ from Transilvania¹². There can be found analogies in the Balkan area, at the Vinča settlement from Stubline-Crkvine¹³, where three miniatures render exactly tools/weapons pecker¹⁴ type.

⁷ Roman 1971, p. 44; Pătroi 2006, p. 94; Pătroi 2015, p. 248; Enea 2013, p. 88; Chmielewski 2014, p. 59.

⁸ Piece discovered by Alexandru Bărcăcilă.

⁹ III-rd phase.

¹⁰ Identical representations can be found at settlements in: Cucuteni, Hăbășești, Bârlălești, Scânteia, Hoiеști, Drăgușești.

¹¹ The axe is mentioned by Dumitru Berciu. The researcher mentions the piece in Museum für Var-und Fruhgeschichte from Berlin, hall II, glass case 8, as coming from Transilvania.

¹² Berciu 1939-142, p. 44; Pătroi 2006, p. 94; Pătroi 2015, p. 248; Enea 2013, p. 101.

¹³ Crnobrnja 2011, p. 133-134; Chmielewski 2014, p. 60.

¹⁴ Among the eleven pieces: two are hammer axes, three peckers, three spherical objects (bludgeons, scepters?), two fragments of peckers, and one piece has a vertical blade at the end of a long body; Crnobrnja 2011, p. 134; Enea 2013, p. 91-92.



Fig. 3. Miniatural representations from Stubline-Crkvine (Apud Crnobrnja 2011).

The evolution of miniatural axes¹⁵ does not stop in the eneolithic period, clay pieces had been identified in the period of transition from eneolithic to the bronze¹⁶, but also in the bronze period¹⁷. Typological, the axes in the mentioned periods do not represent anymore weapons/ tools like those with crossed arms.

Symbol of power or toy for children.

In a recent study, in which it is spoken about the clay miniatural models of the eneolithic axes, Sergiu Constantin Enea mentioned that „the neolithic or eneolithic man also created, among normal, ordinary, necessary, every day life artifacts, plenty of miniaturals pieces, with functionalities and significance still unclear”¹⁸.

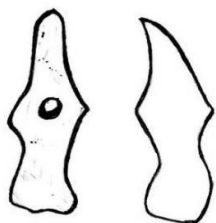


Fig. 4. Miniatural representation from Ostrovul Corbului (apud Roman 1971).

Starting from the fact that this votive axe renders, although, schematically and at small scale a copper axe with crossed arms, it is proved that this weapons/ tools

¹⁵ Regarding the evolution of the miniatural clay axes there have been expressed opinions from researchers like: Cristian Schuster (see Schuster 1998, p. 21-22); Diaconu 2010.

¹⁶ In environment of Horodiștea culture (at Cârniceni and Stoicani) and Coțofeni (Costești, Vâlcea county); Regarding the piece discovered at Costești, assigning it to this culture is questionable (see Vulpe 1967, p. 74, pl. XXVI/24).

¹⁷ Miniatural axes can be found in the cultures: Glina, Zăbala, Schneckenberg, Jigodin, Zoltan, Livezile, Tei, Verbicioara, Wietenberg, Monteoru and Žuto Brdo-Gârla Mare (see Diaconu 2010).

¹⁸ Enea 2013, p. 87.

have had a great importance in the daily life of the eneolithic man.

The same researcher, in an article published in 2008, in which he presents the crossed arms coper axes in Romania, considers that the ones who held leading parts in society used some objects/ symbols through which they displayed their statute to the members of the group or to other communities¹⁹.

Another hypothesis consists in the fact that these miniatures have a symbolic function such as: pendants, amulets²⁰, probably having an apotropaic role, like defence or identification of the gender: boys/ axes; girls/ other pieces²¹.



Fig. 5. Miniatural representation from Scânteia (Apud Lazarovici *et alii* 2009).

The discovery of the complex from Stubline - Crkvine of the settlement Vinča D2 proposes the existence of a stratified society²², where miniatural axes symbolised, why not, the power in an eneolithic society. Another hypothesis refers to the possible organisation of the communities in order to exploit the natural resources from the territory nearby the settlement²³.

Regarding the fact that these pieces have mostly been realised schematic, having an inferior quality, T. J. Chmielewski, adhering to Guminski's theory, he assigns them the role of toys²⁴.

The same researcher mentions that these toys represented the simplest way of social manipulation²⁵, in which children played like warriors, and their

¹⁹ Enea 2008, p. 6.

²⁰ Diaconu 2010, p. 67; The author of the study "mentions that the transposal in burnt clay of the axes ment to bring to the bearer great power and invincibility".

²¹ Enea 2013, p. 94.

²² Crnobrnja 2011, p. 142; The serbian researcher questions the existence of a stratified society in the environment of late Vinča. Another researcher emphasizes the fact that the miniatural models discovered at Stubine hold a high schematism, schematism that does not have analogies in Vinča environment (see Spasić 2014).

²³ Crnobrnja 2014, p. 183.

²⁴ Chmielewski 2014, p. 50.

equipment with this type of pieces was established by the older ones who most likely dealt with their growth and "education".

The usage of the clay miniarural axes like toys in the purpose of the war for manipulating and developing in the spirit of a new generation, does it bring into discussion the existence of an eneolithic war community?

Cultural framing and some conclusions.

Regarding the metal pieces that these imitate, the copper axes with crossed arms have a long evolution in the culture Cucuteni. The first pieces of this kind appear in the phase A 3²⁶ and keep appearing until phase B 2²⁷.

The evolution during almost the whole culture mentioned above brings the problem and question, why do the miniatural pieces discovered so far fit in the phases A 3- A 4.

Regarding the axe discovered in a south Carpathian region, in the area of culture Sălcuța at Ostrovul Corbului in the settlement *Botul Piscului*, the miniature is affiliated to the IIIrd²⁸ phase. The affiliation of that piece seems wrong, because near the point, where it was discovered along with the settlement type Sălcuța III final, there also is an eneolithic cemetery that reached the evolution phase Herculane II.

If in the space of Cucuteni culture there are known many copper axes with crossed arms, that have been clearly assigned to some evolutive phases, the situation in the Sălcuța culture is diametrically opposed to the previous. From the thirty-four discoveries in the Oltenia area²⁹, only the piece from Reșca, Olt county, has precise stratigraphic conditions³⁰.

About the piece from Ocnița (the second of its type from Oltenia) the stratigraphic situation is hard to establish because the placement of the geto-dacians in the area led to extensive terracing work, which led to the destruction of the anterior levels.

Eventhough there are mentioned pottery fragments belonging to the IIIrd phase of Sălcuța culture or Sălcuța IV³¹, the axe could be affiliated to this period.

To observe better the similarities and synchronisms between Cucuteni and cultures Sălcuța III, Sălcuța IV (the horizon of the pill handles) there have

²⁵ Chmielewski 2014, p. 50-51.

²⁶ Enea 2008, p. 15; Axe from Fulgeriș, Bacău county.

²⁷ Enea 2008, p. 22. Axes from warehouse at Târgu Ocna, Bacău county.

²⁸ Pătroi 2006, p. 94; Pătroi 2015, p. 248; The axe was discovered on the beach at Ostrovul Corbului.

²⁹ Pătroi 2015, p. 259, catalogue. 2.

³⁰ Pătroi 2015, p. 241; The axe was discovered at the base of the earth wave from phase III Sălcuța of the settlement in there.

³¹ The horizon of the pill handles; The precise framing of this piece was hard to establish.

been appealed the imports from other cultural areas in the culture Petrești, but also the Petrești imports in other cultures³²:

- Petrești B – Tiszapolgár B 2 – Decea Mureșului – Bodrogkeresztúr – Cucuteni A 3/Type C pottery – Gumelnița B 1 – Sălcuța II-III – Herculane I.

But, for the Bodrogkeresztúr imports and that of the pill handles in the late levels of habitation Ariușd there were noticed the following synchronisms³³:

- Ariușd 3 – Cucuteni A 4, A-B - Tiszapolgár B 2 – Type C pottery – Bodrogkeresztúr A – Sălcuța IV – Herculane II.

As it has been mentioned above, the miniatural axes with crossed arms have an evolution situated between Cucuteni A 3 – A 4, and Sălcuța III - Sălcuța IV, evolution that it is different from that of the cooper axes, which in the zonal of the first culture (Cucuteni) it is certificated also in the phase B 2³⁴.

Regarding the role the miniatural axes held, T. J. Chmielewski mentions their role in children's "education", in the existence of an eneolithic society, where the warriors begin to have an important role³⁵. In supporting this theory, the researcher mentions the fact that the people Cucuteni-Trypolie come in contact with the communities from the pontic steppe in phases A 3 – A 4³⁶.

What if these pieces were toys used in order to train future warriors, why do the miniatures disappear along with the end of phase A 4, this kind of pieces not being encountered in phase A-B of Cucuteni culture?

A possible answer could be expressed in the fact that in the phases A 3 and A 4, the cooper axes were very few in the cucutenian communities, and their lack was substitute by the miniature ones in different rituals in that period.

In supporting this statement, they are discovered in fragmentary state, their destruction possibly being ritualic.

Moreover, the number of the miniatural axes it is not high enough for us to consider that the occupation specific for Cucuteni culture was to prepare future warriors.

The piece from Ocnîța, as it has been previously mentioned, it is the second from south Carpathians area, and the third from outside the cucutenian space³⁷. A cause, it is believed to be - the small number of miniatural representations from outside the cucutenian space, or the actual state of the

³² Gligor 2014, p. 13.

³³ Gligor 2014, p. 15.

³⁴ It is true that in the case of phase B 2 it is about warehouses, fact that suggests the importance of the metal.

³⁵ Chmielewski 2014, p. 51.

³⁶ Chmielewski 2014, p. 54; By the synchronisms presented upper, it can be observed the presence of a type C ceramics as being contemporary to Sălcuța III and Sălcuța IV.

³⁷ A piece identical to the miniatural representation from Ostrovul Corbului is mentioned by Dumitru Berciu in Museum fur Var-und Fruhgeschichte from Berlin, hall II, show case 8, as coming from Transilvania, (Pătroi 2006, p. 94).

researches, or the fact that the materials discovered in the main archaeological researches of the settlements contemporaneous with the phases A 3 - A 4³⁸ are not published yet.

translation by Damian Andreea

**NOTĂ ASUPRA UNEI REPREZENTĂRI MINIATURALE DIN LUT A UNUI
TOPOR CU BRAȚE ÎN CRUCE DESCOPERIT LA OCNIȚA, JUDEȚUL
VÂLCEA**

REZUMAT

În timpul cercetărilor arheologice din anul 1981 de la Ocnița - Buridava Dacică în punctul Cetatea 1, a fost descoperit o reprezentare miniaturală din lut a unui topor cu brațe în cruce din cupru. Piesa de culoare castanie are o lungime de 9,9 cm, fiind realizată din lut de bună calitate, fără impurități, arderea oxidantă.

Referitor la evoluția topoarelor miniaturale din lut, acestea apar în perioada neolitică în culturii ca Lengyel și Vinča urmate de cele din perioada eneolitică, perioada de tranziție, dar și cele din epoca bronzului.

Analogii cu piesa de la Ocnița (a doua reprezentare de acest gen de la sud de Carpați)³⁹ identificăm în arealul culturii Cucuteni în fazele A3 – A4, complexul de la Stubline-Crkvine dar și în spațiul transilvănean printr-o singură reprezentare.

Funcția deținută de aceste toporașe este dificil de precizat; în literatura de specialitate existând teorii legate de utilizarea lor ca simbol de putere (pandantive, amulete) sau aceea de jucării pentru copii. Referitor la a doua funcție (jucărie pentru copii) există păreri că prin utilizarea acestora de noua generație se pregăteau viitorii războinici.

Lipsa unei situații stratigrafice clare a descoperirii ne împiedică să stabilim o încadrare clară. Piesa poate fi încadrată intervalului cuprins de perioada Sălcuța III – Sălcuța IV, toate pastilate.

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 Fig. 4. Reprezentarea miniaturală de la Ostrovul Corbului (Apud Roman 1971).
 Fig. 5. Reprezentarea miniaturală de la Scânteia (Apud Lazarovici *et alii* 2009).

³⁸ Regarding the little number of pieces from outside the cucutenian space, they can not be catalogued as imports.

³⁹ Here are referred the miniatural representations of the crossed arms axes.

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