

NEW INSIGHTS REGARDING THE CLAY TOBACCO PIPES DISCOVERED IN THE HISTORICAL CITY CENTER OF TIMIȘOARA

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I. Introduction

In the last two decades, extensive preventive archaeological research has been undertaken in the historical center of Timișoara due to the many projects initiated in order to restore the city's monuments and public squares. This research has made the discovery of invaluable information in regard to the medieval and pre-modern past of Timișoara possible. The discoveries made were abundant especially in the case of the period related to the Ottoman occupation of the city (1552–1716) considering the impressive ottoman monuments that were revealed alongside the numerous households and artefacts corresponding to this period. Our current research aims to analyze one of the more common objects used by the inhabitants of the city during this period of time, an object which spread rapidly through the Balkans because of Ottoman influence, namely the tobacco clay pipe. The clay pipe, starting from the seventeenth century, was a good used by common folk and people belonging to the upper classes alike, this being facilitated by the rapid spread of the tobacco plant from the New World into Europe. In the following paragraphs we intend to specify certain aspects concerning the history of tobacco smoking and the usage of tobacco clay pipes, after which we shall present the analysis of various such objects discovered during the archaeological digs undertaken in Timișoara's Sf. Gheorghe Square and Civic Park.

Tobacco was first introduced into Europe by the Spanish and more specifically by Francisco Fernandez in the year 1558¹, who had been sent to Mexico

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¹ Robinson 1985, 149.

by King Philip II. In the following decades, the tobacco plant and, implicitly the habit of smoking were heavily popularized throughout the continent. Although at first a vice taken over only by the rich, it quickly became a habit enjoyed by everyone regardless of their social status. In the Ottoman Empire smoking seems to have become a common practice approximately in the first decade of the seventeenth century, while some evidence exists that the Turks had already been introduced to it by the end of the sixteenth century. Eventually, smoking had become so prevalent throughout the Empire that even prohibitive measures were taken against it, as it was deemed against the religious norms imposed by Islam, unhealthy and even a potential fire hazard. Despite the attempt at prohibiting tobacco smoking, its popularity continued to grow and by the second half of the seventeenth century any such measures were abandoned². Flourishing centers of pipe making rose throughout the Empire such as Sofia, where a pipe maker's guild had already been established by 1604 or Burgaz, a town near Edirne, for which pipe making became so important that the town took on the name *Luleburgaz* (*lule* being the Turkish word for pipe bowl).

After the tobacco plant was introduced to Europe, pipes constituted the main object used in order to smoke. These were made out of various materials such as clay, wood or stone, although clay was undeniably the most common material utilized for the purpose of crafting them, at least until the twentieth century. Following the First World War, clay pipes suffered a drastic decline caused by both the rise of briar wood as the main material used in pipe making and the popularization of cigar and cigarette smoking³.

The complex techniques required in order to craft a pipe made it so that clay pipe making became a separate artisanship from pottery making, despite the two crafts using the same raw materials and sharing specific similarities regarding the fabrication process of the finished product. Pipe making has often been regarded by researchers as more similar to metalworking, rather than pottery making⁴, mostly because of the usage of moulds, but also because of different decoration techniques employed. In order to obtain a pipe-bowl, the artisans had to use fine clay fabric, which had to be washed and filtered, after which it was supposed to be pressed into a mould. After the material was pressed and hardened, clay was dug out in order to create a chamber where the tobacco would be burned and a draft hole through which the smoke would pass. At this stage of the process the pipe would be decorated using various techniques and then baked. A secondary baking would eventually be employed after the application of different slips or glazes. Besides decorating the pipe using

² Robinson 1985, 151.

³ Robinson 1985, 152.

⁴ Stančeva 1972, 95.

grooves, incisions and complex patterns, sometimes precious metals were utilized in order to create decorative threads.

As the pipe became a common good used and manufactured around the continent, two main types of pipes could be distinguished, even though in the beginning all types of smoking pipes were quite similar: the western type and the eastern-mediterranean type. Besides the dissimilarities in shape and decoration, one main difference stemming from the number of pipe components emerged: the western type consisted of two parts, the pipe-head and the stem, whereas the eastern type was composed out of three different pieces, namely the pipe-head, the stem and the mouthpiece. In the case of the latter, the stems were made out of reeds or wood (cherry and ash wood were preferred), while the mouthpieces were made either out of amber, coral or semiprecious stone.

II. Description of the artefacts

Pipe made out of clay, fragmentarily preserved (only a fragment of the leg and the ring were preserved, the pipe-head being shattered where the bowl once began). The pipe had a light brown color, with a layer of engobe being present on its surface. There were no decorations present on the leg, while the ring was decorated with grooves. The object was made out of fine fabric with inclusions of fine sand, using oxidant firing. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.1/1)

Pipe made out of clay, fragmentarily preserved (this fragment represents an intact ring together with the leg that was broken halfway). The fragment is of reddish brown color, with engobe being present on its surface. No decorations can be seen on the leg, while the ring was decorated with oval grooves. The object was made out of fine fabric with inclusions of fine sand with oxidant firing used during the fabrication process (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.1/2).

Pipe made out of clay, fragmentarily preserved (the piece was split around the bowl area). The fragment is of dark brown color and the presence of engobe on its surface can also be noted. The shank is adorned with a row of lattice shaped decorations placed between sets of straight, narrow grooves. The bowl is also richly decorated with floral motifs on the sides as well as on the bottom of the bowl. The object was crafted out of fine fabric and inclusions of fine sand, while a mixed firing process can also be observed. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.1/3)

Pipe made out of clay using fine fabric and inclusions of fine sand. Oxidant firing was employed during the fabrication process. The object is modestly decorated with two round protuberances on opposite sides of the bowl. The shank is shaped similar to a hexagonal cylinder, with the two sides corresponding to the

bottom of the shank stretching along the bottom of the pipe bowl, forming an oval shape. It should also be noted that this piece was fragmentarily preserved, the bowl being broken (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.1/4).

Pipe made out of kaolin, fragmentarily preserved, crafted using fine fabric and inclusions of fine sand. Given the fact that this piece was molded out of kaolin a white color was obtained for the finished product. The pipe bowl is bell-shaped while the shank is slightly curved. Also, the shank stretches slightly along the bottom of the bowl, forming a triangle marked by small decorative ridges made using the cogwheel. At the end of the shank, right next to the ring, a swelling is present that was also decorated using the cogwheel, forming curved lines. The cogwheel was also employed to create straight decorative lines of the same type around the shank and the bowl. One such line marks the upper end of the bowl and the beginning of the rim, while another is placed between two ring-shaped protrusions on the upper side of the bowl. Between these two lines, along the rim, rows of small, triangular decorations etched into the mold can be observed. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.2/1).

Pipe made out of clay using fine fabric and fine sand. Oxidant firing was employed in the making of the object, resulting in a reddish brown color. It should be mentioned that this piece was fragmentarily preserved (broken at the end of the shank). Also, the pipe bowl seems to be richly decorated with straight corrugations that start at the center of the bottom of the bowl. At the bottom, these corrugations are interrupted by the shank, which stretches towards the center of the bowl to form a triangle, while halfway up the bowl they are interrupted by two rows of stamped triangular decorations with tiny and round protrusions inside. Above these geometric motifs a simple, horizontal line was etched into the surface using the cogwheel and placed between two horizontal incisions on each side. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.2/2).

Pipe made out of kaolin with fine fabric and inclusions of fine sand. Oxidant firing was employed during the crafting process. Also, it should be noted that this object has a white color. Unfortunately, this piece was fragmentarily preserved considering that the shank was broken almost entirely off the bowl, with the exception of the elongation that forms a triangle-like shape at the center of the bottom of the bowl. Also, a straight incision can still be observed as the decoration of the bottom side of the shank. The bowl is followed by a rim that is taller, but narrower and which is decorated on the upper side with a horizontal line made using the cogwheel. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.2/3).

Pipe made out of kaolin using oxidant firing, thus resulting in a white color. Fine fabric and inclusions of fine sand were used while making the pipe. The object displays simple decorations represented by five corrugations made using the cogwheel starting at the center of the bottom of the bowl and ending in its

front. Also, a narrow swelling can be observed at the ring. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.3/1).

Fragmentarily preserved pipe made out of kaolin using fine fabric, inclusions of fine sand and then baked inside an oxidant environment. The color of the object is white and its bowl is bell-shaped, with a rim tall and narrower than the bowl. The ring was decorated using the cogwheel and a narrow swelling was placed right next to it, followed by another decorative vertical line made using the cogwheel. The shank stretches slightly towards the bottom of the center of the bowl, thus forming a small triangle. The bottom side of the bowl is marked by simple, but frequent corrugations, while the rim has a fine surface decorated only with a horizontal line made with the cogwheel in the area where the rim meets the bowl. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.3/2).

Pipe made using kaolin and baked in an oxidant environment, thus resulting in a white color. The object was crafted using fine fabric and fine sand. The pipe bowl is bell-shaped, with its rim being taller, but also narrower than the bowl. The area right next to the ring is marked by a swelling decorated with small, round grooves. The shank stretches to the center of the bottom side of the bowl, forming a triangle marked by lines made using the cogwheel. Three other horizontal lines of the same type were used to decorate the bowl, the rim and the area where the bowl meets the rim. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.3/3).

Pipe made out of kaolin using fine fabric and inclusions of fine sand. Oxidant firing was employed in the crafting process, and the color that resulted in the finished product was white. The bowl is bell-shaped, with a tall and narrow rim. Right next to the ring a decorative swelling was placed, flanked on each side by narrow, vertical lines made using the cogwheel. The shank stretches towards the center of the bottom of the bowl, forming a triangle marked by two lines made using the cogwheel. Another two such lines were used to decorate the bowl: one crosses the middle of the bowl horizontally, while the other was placed in the lower area of the rim, where above it a horizontal incision is also present. (Sf. Gheorghe Square, Layer, -1,60/-1.90m) (Pl.3/4).

Pipe made out of clay (fine fabric with inclusions of fine sand) which was baked using reduction firing. The presence of engobe can be observed, giving the object a smooth and pitch black surface. The ring of the pipe splays out from the rest of the shank and ends with a ring shaped prominence, while the narrower shank extends forward to cover the bottom side of the bowl, forming the heel of the pipe. The bowl is decorated with ellipsoidal protrusions resembling petals, after which they are followed by another ring-shaped prominence. From there on, a narrower and richly decorated rim extends (the decorations that were used were comprised of a horizontal line made using the cogwheel,

followed by frequent vertical incisions). Inside the chamber a small ceramic plate with five draft holes can be found. (Civic Park) (Pl.4/1)

Pipe made out of clay, using fine fabric and inclusions of fine sand, then baked inside an oxidant atmosphere (the color of the object is red). The pipe consists of a large ring (wider than the rest of the shank), a shank that extends under the bottom side of the bowl up to its front, where it forms a triangle from which two ellipsoidal bulges stand out on the sides of the bowl. Above them, a tall rim extends, preserved fragmentarily. The object presents glamorous decorations on the shank and on the bowl as well. The shank is decorated with different geometric patterns, three incisions that cross its bottom side and a bronze band that is wrapped around it. In front of the bowl, at the tip of the aforementioned bulges, two small, round grooves can be noticed from which two curved rows comprised of crescent-shaped incisions begin (they end on the upper side of the rim where another set of small grooves can be found). On the side of the rim that was more favorably preserved another round, but larger groove can be observed, together with a row of parallel incisions on the upper side of the rim. (Civic Park) (Pl.5/1)

Pipe made out of clay, fragmentarily preserved (most of the shank was broken off together with a piece from the front of the rim). The object has a red color and was crafted out of fine fabric and fine sand then baked in an oxidant atmosphere. The remaining piece of the shank extends to the front of the bowl, forming a triangle where two ellipsoidal bulges stand out on the sides of the bowl, above which a tall rim extends. The shank is decorated with a row of straight, parallel incisions on its bottom side and two rows of curved, parallel incisions placed right below the aforementioned bulges (where two circular incisions can also be observed). The rim is richly decorated with wheat patterns, while also being wrapped over by a bronze ring. (Civic Park) (Pl.5/2).

III. Categories

1. Reddish undecorated pipes

This category of tobacco pipes includes some of the more modest pipes found during the archaeological excavations carried out in Timișoara's historical center. They are characterized by their lack of decoration and the shiny reddish engobe found on their surface. The only decoration that can be observed is usually found on the ring, which most often consists of grooves, creating a star-shaped ring in section. According to both Szuszanna Kopeczny⁵ and Adriana Gașpar⁶, these pipes were used either by soldiers stationed in the city

⁵ Kopeczny 2012, 169.

⁶ Gașpar 2016, 268.

or by common folk. Only two such objects discovered during the excavations at St. George Square could be assigned to this category, based on the shape of the ring and the decorations present on it, since both of the mentioned objects are fragmentarily preserved, with the pipe bowls being broken off the leg (Pl.1/1,2). Another type of undecorated reddish undecorated pipe is represented by a piece with two small protuberances on each side of the bowl (Pl.1/4). Similar objects have been discovered in Jeni Palank⁷, Buda⁸ and Oradea⁹.

2. *Turkish pipes*

This category consists of lavishly decorated pipes with a larger variety of shapes in comparison with the previously mentioned category. As it was mentioned in other studies¹⁰, the main tools used in decorating such pieces were the cogwheel and the revolving shutter (which most frequently seems to be toothed), thus creating various patterns usually illustrating triangles, rectangles or other geometrical shapes, especially on the bowl. The color of such pieces could also differ, from dark brown to reddish nuances and also white and grey in the case of pipes made out of kaolin clay. Pipes assigned to this category are also often decorated with stamps resembling flowers, leaves, rosettes or even common objects such as pairs of scissors. Although the objects analysed in this article do not present stamped decorations, they do present decorations consisting of various corrugations, lines and shapes made using the cogwheel and the revolving shutter, while incised motifs could also be noted in the case of some objects.

2.a. *Kaolin pipes*

Six of the clay tobacco pipes (Pl.2/1,3; Pl.3/1,2,3,4) discovered in Sf. Gheorghe Square are made out of kaolin clay, which explains their white or yellowish white color of their surfaces. The decorations visible on the surface of these pipes seem to be modest, usually consisting of straight incisions or lines etched into the surface using the cogwheel or the revolving shutter. One common motif observed among five of these pipes is the triangle shape marked by either incisions or lines made with the revolving shutter on the bottom side of the bowl. Although we haven't found suitable analogies for most of these pipes, except for one piece which features a slightly concave bowl on the outside surface and a rounded bottom side, with triangle shaped decorations visible on the bowl (Pl.2/1) (a similar piece was discovered in Szeged¹¹). However it is visible

⁷ Gaál 2004, 264–273.

⁸ Kondorosy 2021, 164–165.

⁹ Kondorosy 2014, 219.

¹⁰ Kopeczny 2012, 171.

¹¹ Kondorosy 2008, 359.

that the rest of the pieces share similar characteristics with other pipes discovered in the region. Based on the shapes of these objects and the raw material used to produce them (kaolin), which was widely used during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we can assume that these pipes are dated to the seventeenth century.

2.b. *Flower-printed pipes*

This category includes an artefact (Pl.1/3) which is quite rare and is highlighted by the floral motifs incised into the surface of the bowl. According to Szabolcs Kondorosy¹², this type of object represents a regional variant of the Turkish pipe, distinguished by the artistic freedom displayed by the craftsman in order to decorate the bowl with various flower-related decorations. The pipe included in this category is of a dark brown color and features a flower with large petals placed on the bottom side of the bowl, out of which long stems reach out upwards to the middle of the bowl where other small flowers spring out; next to the rim a lattice-type row decoration is flanked on each side by two incised lines. One unique feature noted while observing the artefact is represented by the traces of white paint encrusted into the incised floral decorations. Objects similar to the one discovered in Sf. Gheorghe Square were also found at Buda¹³, Oradea¹⁴ and Babocsa¹⁵.

2.c. *Pipes made out of reddish brown clay with stamped triangular decorations*

A single piece (Pl.2/2) could be included in this category, characterized by a reddish brown color and by stamped triangular decorations with small round protrusions inside. Other than these two distinct features, this clay pipe shares similar decorative motifs with other aforementioned Turkish pipes, such as the corrugations etched into the bowl using the revolving shutter, or the triangle shaped extension which stretches from the shank towards the center of the bottom side of the bowl. It is necessary to note that proper analogies haven't been found for this particular pipe, which could suggest that the decorations had local influences.

3. *Austro-Hungarian pipes*

Out of the pieces covered by this study, three of them can be dated in the nineteenth century, thus being placed in the 'Austro-Hungarian' category. One of those is quite an interesting and rare piece, namely a lavishly decorated clay pipe covered in a shiny black engobe (Pl4/1). Two interesting details about this pipe are that inside the bowl, five draft holes can be found (presumably

¹² Kondorosy 2021, 156.

¹³ Kondorosy 2021, 166.

¹⁴ Kondorosy 2014, 222.

¹⁵ Kovács, Rózsás 2014, 252.

made for the purpose of slightly cooling the smoke before it being inhaled), while on the ring a fragment of a metallic band can be observed. Also, two separate workshop marks were stamped on the surface on the bowl. One of these marks spells out the name *K AZAR* while the other displays a stamped insect with large wings with the name *KIS AZAR* placed above it. These two stamps refer to the Kis Azar village, located in the Zemplén county of Hungary (today known as Male Ozorovce in Slovakia), renowned especially around the middle of the nineteenth century for the high quality of the clay tobacco pipes made in its local workshop and also for the general quality of the clay found locally. Unfortunately, not many such objects coming from this specific workshop have been found. We were able to identify only a few suitable analogies for this object. A couple of clay pipes bearing the same manufacturer's marks (*KIS AZAR* and *K AZAR*) were unearthed in the Hungarian town of Kormend¹⁶. Surprisingly, another such piece was discovered in the city of New York during excavations made in the historic block where the Stadt Huys (New York's first city hall, built by the Dutch in 1642) and the famous Lovelace Tavern were once located. Although the two respective monuments, some of the most important in the city's early history, were long gone by the middle of the nineteenth century (the time when this particular piece can be dated), the area where they were located still constituted an important part of the city's commercial district. Thus, considering the fact that the period when the manufacturing of the *Kis Azar* clay pipes took place matches chronologically with the first waves of Hungarians who migrated into the United States in the nineteenth century, we could consider the possibility that the object was brought over so far away from its production center by one such Hungarian migrant. It is also reasonably important to note that although not many clay pipes bearing the *Kis Azar* production mark have been brought to light by archaeological research, some information regarding this pipe making center can be found in written sources¹⁷ from that era which mention both the quality and the popularity of the *Kis Azar* tobacco clay pipes.

Two additional nineteenth century clay tobacco pipes (Pl.5/1,2) constitute a part of this study, which are quite alike both in shape and decoration. They both present a reddish color and feature geometric shapes and incisions resembling ears of wheat. Very similar objects have been discovered in Kormend¹⁸ and they have been attributed to a category of nineteenth century tobacco pipes which draw inspiration from Turkish pipes. One significant aspect regarding these two objects is that they both present metallic bands

¹⁶ Nagy 2001, 181.

¹⁷ Nagy 2001, 18.

¹⁸ Nagy 2001, 138.

attached to them, one of them having the band placed around the bowl, while the other having it placed next to the ring.

Considering that all three pipes attributed to this category each include a sort of metallic band attached to them, it is important to mention that this seems to have been a feature of the so called *Coffehouse*¹⁹ style tobacco pipes, which included metallic lids affixed to the main body of the piece using the sort of bands present on the previously mentioned objects. These types of pipes were usually smoked in coffee shops and were quite in vogue in the nineteenth century. Tobacco clay pipes featuring such attachments have also been discovered in Zadar²⁰ and Dubrovnik²¹.

IV. Conclusions

Although numerous studies have already been published concerning the types of tobacco clay pipes discovered in the historical center of Timișoara, with each following a similar structure in regards to the typologies presented, we considered that a study based on a new batch of discoveries, namely the ones from Sf. Gheorghe Square and Civic Park, would still provide valuable additional information to what was already known about this particular subject. The artefacts corresponding to the *reddish undecorated pipes* category presented here provide nothing unique in comparison with those already discovered in Timișoara. The same cannot be said about the objects attributed to the category of the *Turkish pipes*. The objects presented and included here, more precisely the kaolin pipes, show similarities with other *Turkish pipes* unearthed in Timișoara and elsewhere when it comes to the methods of decoration employed, although it can be observed that the decoration itself is quite distinct and modest, which could point out that these objects were local variants of the *Turkish pipes* used throughout the eighteenth century. Out of these artefacts, two especially stand out, namely the reddish brown pipe characterized by stamped triangular decorations on the bowl (for which we could not find a suitable analogy) and the flower-printed pipe, an object which according to prior studies represents a regional and quite rare variant of the *Turkish pipe*. It is important to note that the artefacts mentioned so far were recovered during the preventive archaeological research undertaken in 2017 in Sf. Gheorghe Square, from the archaeological layers of the excavation. The other three clay tobacco pipes discussed here which were datable to the nineteenth century, included in the category of the *Austro-Hungarian pipes*, were discovered during the preventive archaeological

¹⁹ Gusar 2008, 143.

²⁰ Gusar 2008, 152.

²¹ Milošević, Topić, 2011, 306.

research undertaken in Timișoara's Civic Park in 2020. One important aspect related to these artefacts is tied to the metallic bands attached to each one of them, which could mean that they were part of the so called *Coffeeshouse* style tobacco pipes, widespread throughout coffee shops in the nineteenth century. The *Kis Azar* pipe especially stands out, discoveries of objects manufactured in this specific workshop being extremely rare despite several mentions of the popularity and high quality of these pipes in the written sources.

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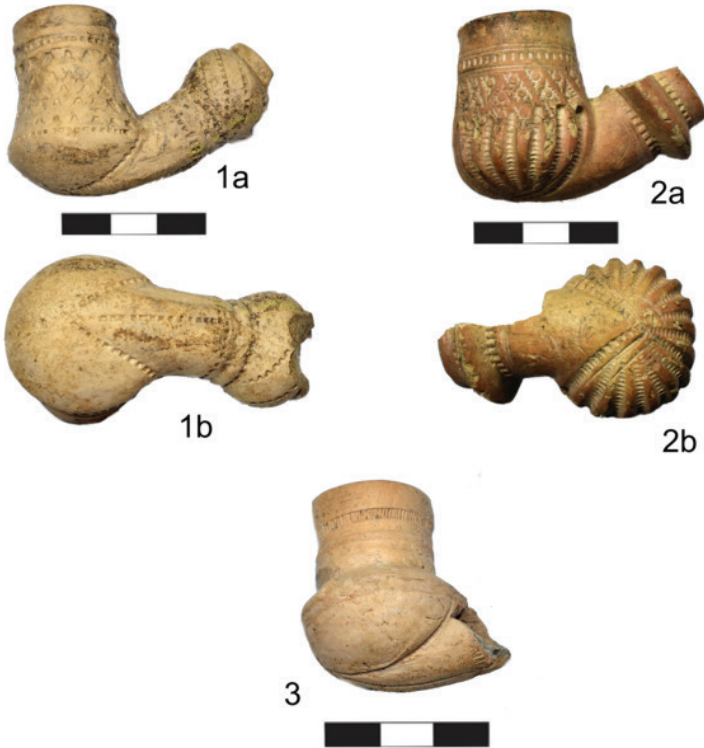
NOI SEMNIFICAȚII PRIVIND PIPELE DE LUT DESCOPERITE ÎN CENTRUL ISTORIC AL TIMIȘOAREI

Rezumat

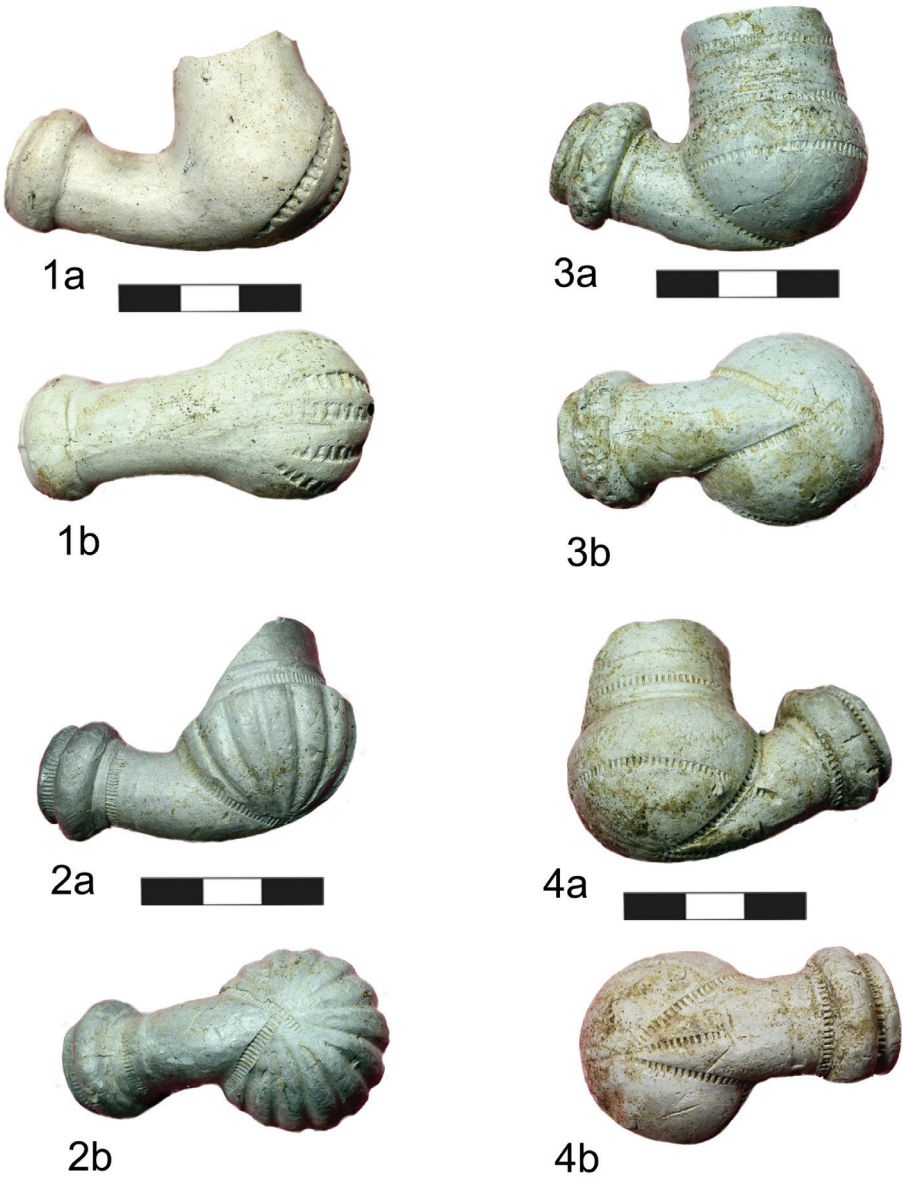
Articolul de față tratează problema unor noi descoperiri de pipe de lut din centrul istoric al Timișoarei, realizate în urma cercetărilor preventive din Piața Sf. Gheorghe (2017) și Parcul Civic (2020). Cele paisprezece piese prezentate în cadrul acestei lucrări cuprind pipe databile atât în secolul XVIII, în timpul ocupației otomane a orașului, cât și în secolul XIX. Analizarea pieselor respective a dus la stabilirea a trei mari categorii observate anterior și în alte lucrări referitoare la pipele de lut descoperite în cadrul săpăturilor arheologice din Timișoara: pipele nedecorate de culoare roșiatică, pipele turcești și pipele austro-ungare.



Pl. I. 1, 2, 4 – Reddish undecorated pipes; 3 – Turkish flower-printed pipe (Sf. Gheorghe Square). / 1, 2, 4 – Pipe nedecorate de culoare roșiatică; 3 – Pipe turcești cu decor floral (Piața Sf. Gheorghe).



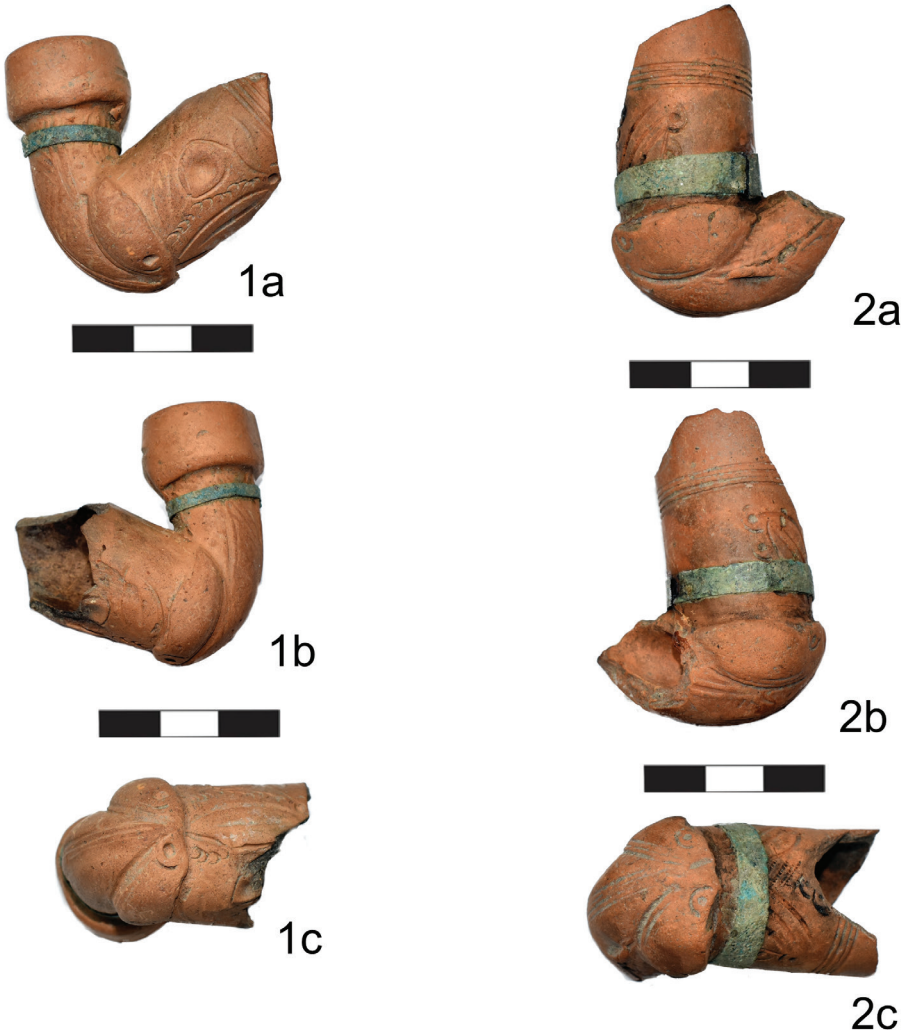
Pl. II. 1, 2, 3 – Turkish pipes (Sf. Gheorghe Square). /
1, 2, 3 – Pipe turcești (Piața Sf. Gheorghe).



Pl. III. 1, 2, 3 – Turkish pipes (Sf. Gheorghe Square). /
1, 2, 3 – Pipe turcești (Piața Sf. Gheorghe).



Pl. IV. *Kis Azar* clay tobacco pipe (Civic Park). / Pipă de lut de tip *Kis Azar* (Parcul Civic).



Pl. V. Austro-Hungarian pipes (Civic Park). / Pipe austro-ungare (Parcul Civic).