

RESUMING THE RESEARCH OF THE COSLOGENI GROUP (LATE BRONZE AGE) SETTLEMENT SYSTEMS. FIRST STEP**

Abstract: This contribution is a first step in trying to resume the issue of settlements and housing structures in the Lower Danube area. Archaeological sources provide very little data about the topic under discussion. However, the type of economy, habitat and building materials determined the type of settlement structure and housing forms. Largely, they resemble the pattern of the Sabatinovka-Noua-Coslogeni “cultural complex”, but such structures were found sporadically in the area of other contemporary cultures, too. The limited number and the very often-fortuitous character of the discoveries and the location of the Coslogeni group in a Western Black Sea passageway point out the seasonal nature of the shelters. Moreover, the obvious similarities between Sabatinovka and Coslogeni groups plead for the idea that the latest might be considered as a southern or south-western extension on the road to the rich southern lands.

Keywords: Late Bronze Age, Lower Danube, Settlements, Dwellings.

Preliminary notes

Discovered in the early 70's of the last century, the Coslogeni pottery group has been ascribed to the Late Bronze Age in the region of the Lower Danube, being often considered a southern extension of the Sabatinovka – Noua I “cultural complex”¹. This new cultural set up, which resembles in several features - type of

* University Alexandru Ioan Cuza of Iași, Faculty of History Carol I, 11 700506 – Iași, n_bolohan@yahoo.com.

** This contribution represent some introductory notes to my PhD thesis (*Civilizațiile de la sfârșitul Epocii bronzului din spațiul sud-carpatic al României și relațiile lor cu cele din sud-estul Europei*, mss) in the chapter dedicated to the Coslogeni pottery group. I have now the opportunity to express my warmly thanks to dr. Marian Neagu and Vasile Oprea from the *Muzeul Dunării de Jos*-Călărași, They generously helped me to focus on the “Coslogeni connexion” during my PhD program.

¹ For this discussion on the origin of the Coslogeni pottery group and/or the alien cultural contribution were expressed different opinions regarding the dominant cultural elements. Adrian C. Florescu and other scientists from Romania considered that this new cultural group is a southern extension of the Noua culture. On the other hand, especially archaeologists from the Republic of Moldova believe that this pottery group is a southern extension of the Sabatinovka culture. See at Marian Neagu *The eastern component of the Coslogeni culture*, CCDJ, X, 1993, 166 and footnotes 23, 24. For a highlighted view on the North Pontic cultural input at the setting up of the Coslogeni pottery group see, Mihai Irimia *Descoperiri din bronzul târziu pe teritoriul Dobrogei și unele probleme privind*

settlement, ceramics, bone, stone and metal artefacts – with the aforementioned “cultural complex”, covered, during its maximum development, the South-Eastern Romania (Muntenia/Walachia and Dobrudja) and the North-Eastern Bulgaria, down to Varna. Location-wise, the Coslogeni pottery group may be regarded as a bridge between the cultural phenomena in the northern Black Sea area and the Western and South-Western Black Sea area. Within this frame, towards the end of its existence, the Coslogeni group stood out through its own characteristic features. The fluctuating economy type, mostly based on livestock and agriculture, might explain this preference for low hilly, flat or sometimes flooded areas. Throughout their development, the communities belonging to this cultural group did not extend, to the north, beyond the Ialomița river basin, which stands as a cultural contact area. In recent years, due to new research, there is new data about the northern area of the Coslogeni pottery group. This includes North-Eastern Muntenia/Wallachia and much of the northern Dobrudja. According to these findings, another contact area/cultural corridor between Sabatinovka and Coslogeni groups, can be presumed as well.

Moreover, there is archaeological evidence for proving the survival of some characteristics belonging to the Middle Bronze Age and for some borrowings from the neighbouring Noua culture. It remains to establish which cultural items of North and North-West Pontic coast have impressed the cultural aspect in South-Eastern Romania and North-Eastern Bulgaria². To the west, the Coslogeni pottery group extended beyond the Mostiștea river basin, reaching, as disparate forms, Zimnicea on the Danube. In fact, between these two parts there might be another area of contact between the Coslogeni and Zimnicea-Plovdiv/Čerkovna groups, a phenomenon that also included some Late Tei cultural imprints, ultimately leading to the birth of the so-called mixed-aspect of the Radovanu type. The latter might be considered as a western outpost of the Coslogeni communities. To the east, although sporadically, features of this culture were found as far as the Black Sea shores. Finally, to the South, the Danube line was crossed. Artifacts of the Sabatinovka and Coslogeni types have been reported in a diffused way up to Yagnilo, Varna (in Bulgaria)³ and Troy in North Western Anatolia⁴. If estimates

cultura Coslogeni, Thraco-Dacica, XXII, 1-2, 2001, 184, pl. 1-2. Analyzing the large vessels from Grădina (Constanța County), he concludes, “they belong to a Sabatinovka community entering in Dobrudja during the historical process that *preceded* (s.n.) the formation of the Coslogeni culture”. An “external” view regarding the components of the Sabatinovka-Noua-Coslogeni cultural unit see at Dietrich Koppenhöfer, Buckelkeramik und Barbarische Ware in Troia: Anmerkungen zur Herkunft, in Rustem Aslan, Stephan Blum, Gabrielle Kasti, Frank Schweizer, Diane Thumm (Hrs.) *Mauerschau. Festschrift für Manfred Korfmann*, Band 2, Remshalden-Grünbach, (2002), p. 679, 687.

² see *supra*.

³ For the Yagnilo discoveries and the pottery analogies see, Goranka Tončeva, *Fouilles d'une necropole et d'un site de l'âge du bronze récent du village Yagnilo (dép. de Varna)*, Thracia IV, 1977, 147-182. Although from 1970 to the present the Coslogeni map has grown up, the representative archaeological site remains Grădiștea-Coslogeni. Researches in the eponymous site were resumed in 1986 under the direction of Petre Diaconu and

are correct, some of the artifacts found in Central and Eastern Macedonia (Kastanas, Assiros, *Toumba-Thessalonikis* etc.)⁵ and even in Southern Balkan Peninsula, at Tyrins, Korakou, Menelaion in Sparta may find their analogies north of the Stara Planina, towards the Lower Danube area.⁶

This fluctuating boundary reflects the cultural convulsions occurring at the end of the Bronze Age and the complexity of the phenomena in which these communities were involved. Some of these elements were involved in the events that took place on large areas of the Balkans and North-Western Anatolia and which, eventually, led to a new cultural pattern. Archaeological data does not provide enough arguments to determine the existence of two or three areas of development corresponding to the alleged stages of the Coslogeni pottery group. Therefore, it appears that for a long time this group has controlled a very important part of the Lower Danube, especially, a marginal way of access to the “fascinating” southern world or to the natural wealth of the Northern Pontic area.

Settlements

Archaeological sources and the environment provide very little evidence on the settlements and housing structures. However, the type of economy, habitat and building materials (generally rapid combustion) determined the type of settlement structure and housing forms. Largely, they resemble the pattern of the Sabatinovka-Noua-Coslogeni “cultural complex”, but such structures were found sporadically in the area of other contemporary cultures, for example in the eastern area of the Tei

Marian Neagu and continued until mid 90's. Besides a wider excavation, report published in 1986 by currently, no monographic study was drawn up to clarify "the situation" of this final Late Bronze Age group. For certain information and details on stratigraphy and some archaeological details, as well as the history about the investigations from Grădiștea-Coslogeni to see Marian Neagu, Dan Barasab Nanu, *Considerații preliminare asupra așezării eponime de la Grădiștea-Coslogeni, județul Călărași*, CCDJ, II, 1986, 99-117 and footnote 2. For a broader view of this culture and its position in the cultural conglomerate of the Lower Danube in the period, see Bernhard Hänsel, *Beiträge zur regionalen und chronologischen Gliederung der älteren Hallstattzeit an der unteren Donau*, 1976, I, 73-76 (Henceforth *Hallstattzeit*) and S. Morintz, *Contribuții arheologice la istoria tracilor timpurii*, I, 1978, 121-152. (Henceforth *Contribuții*).

⁴ A first attempt for finding this kind of relations between the Lower Danube and Troy, see Ida Carleton Thallon, *Some Balkan and Danubian Connexions of Troy*, JHS XXXIX, 1919, 193-202; Attila László, *Dates radiocarbone et chronologie de la civilization Noua-Sabatinovka-Coslogeni*, CCDJ, X, 1993, 24-43 and the bibliography.

⁵ A review of this possible north-south connection across the Stara Planina range see at, Neculai Bolohan, *Danube, Balkans, Northern Aegean. trade routes, influences and buffer zones in late Bronze Age* in, Robert Laffineur, Emmanuele Greco (ed. by), *Emporia. Aegeans in the Central and Eastern Mediterranean*, *Aegeum* 25, Liège (2005), p. 161-171 and pl. XXXVI-XLII and references.

⁶ Neculai Bolohan, *op.cit.* footnotes 2, 27-29 and the recent bibliography concerning the presence and the spreading of a *Balkan-Danubian* like pottery.

culture⁷ and further north, in Central Transylvania within the area of the western variant of Noua culture, recently reported⁸. Thus, archaeological monuments of "ash pan" type, with presumed different destinations and interpretations⁹ were characteristic of this area for the Late Bronze Age¹⁰. Most of the settlements were concentrated along the watercourses and were located higher than the surrounding area, and are noticed in the shape of flattened mounds with diameters up to 50 m and a high content of ash, pottery and animal bone fragments, found in layers between 0,90 m to 1,50 m¹¹.

Depending on the number, the degree of concentration, size and internal structure of the "ash-pans"¹² the following typology could be established:

- Habitation area consisting of several „ash-pans” or groups of “ash-pans”, see the examples from *Grădiștea-Coslogeni*, *Lupșanu*, *Stejaru*¹³, *Ștefan cel Mare*¹⁴;

⁷ Christian F. Schuster, Alexandra Comșa, Traian Popa, *The archaeology of fire in the bronze age of Romania*, 2001, 27-28 and footnote 22.

⁸ Mihai Wittenberger *A special site of the Noua culture – Bolduș*, Cluj County in Neculai Bolohan, Florica Mățău, Adrian Felix Tencariu, *Signa Praehistorica. Studia in honorem magistri Attila László septuagesimo anno*, Editura Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Iași, 2010, p. 265-283.

⁹ An relevant analysis concerning the significance of these multipurpose structures/settlements encountered from the Urals toward the Eastern Carpathians in a very generous chronological niche see at Eugen N. Sava, *Die spätbronzezeitlichen Aschenhügel („Zol’niki”)-ein Erklärungsmodell und einige historisch-wirtschaftliche Aspekte*, PZ, 80, 1, 2005, 66-109, especially pages 88-93.

¹⁰ For the resuming of the “ash-pan” research, inner structure and multiple destination see, Laura Dietrich, *“Aschenhugel” der Noua-Kultur als Plätze von Arbeit und Fest* in, Sándor Berecki, Rita E. Németh, Botond Bezi, (ed. by) *Bronze Age Rites and Rituals in the Carpathian Basin*, Proceedings of the International Colloquium from Târgu Mureș, 8+10 October 2010, Editura Mega, Târgu Mureș, 2011, 131-143 and the references.

¹¹ Sebastian Morintz, Niță Anghelescu, *O nouă cultură a epocii bronzului în România. Cultura de tip Coslogeni*, SCIVA, 21, 3, 1970, 377, 404. (Henceforth *Cultura de tip Coslogeni*) See also the article „ash-pan”, where the author rightly finds analogies between the process of forming of the „ash-pans” and the formation of the tells; Ion Chicideanu, *Cenușar*, EAIVR, I, A-C, 1994, 280. For a short review concerning the main features of this archaeological monument, see Eugen Comșa, *L’évolution des types d’habitation du territoire de la Roumanie (depuis l’énéolithique jusqu’à la fin de l’âge du bronze)*, in: Anton Peschew, Dimitar Popov, Kiril Jordanov, I. Von Bredow (Hrsg.), *Dritter internationaler Thrakologischer Kongress zu Ehren W. Tomascheks*, 2. -6. Juni 1980, Wien, Band 1, 1984, Sofia 132, 134 (121-137).

¹² I considered that, at least within the Coslogeni group, “ash-pans” had a domestic destination. Until now, no reliable data has been reported in order to support another meaning of their role. At Coslogeni, based on stratigraphic analysis and internal structure has been observed that “ash-pans” are the result of a sequence of deposits covering certain facilities; Marian Neagu, Valentin Parnic, Anișoara Topârceanu, Stănică Pandrea, *Roseți (com. Roseți, jud. Călărași), Punct Grădiștea Coslogeni*, CCA, Campania 2003, (2004), 261.

- Habitation area consisting of a single larger “ash-pan”, up to 80 m in diameter, which includes dwelling traces in the form of adobe floors, splice fragments, pit houses and hearths, as at Călărași-Măgureni, Dorobanțu, Ulmu¹⁵.

The research initiated during the late '60s, resumed later in the '80s and '90s, did not provide conclusive data regarding the shape and structure of the settlements belonging to the Coslogeni pottery group. There is no standard set of data (type of habitat, dimensions, external and internal facilities, the degree of attending the place) allowing classification and interpretative patterns. Even data from the eponymous site has been rather controversial on this aspect. Thus, the research done in the mid 80's in the “ash-pan” No 1 reported the existence of eight clusters of archaeological materials, while the 1995 archaeological report mentioned only the existence of three irregularly - shaped earthen platform. These data left open the issue of domestic arrangements within the habitation structures of the Coslogeni pottery group. In 1986, when the research at *Grădiște*a-Coslogeni was resumed, there have been investigated four *loci* containing hearths or ovens, while some other three arrangements presented alveolar shape not exceeding 5,00 m long and 0,45 deep. The authors of the research suggested cautiously the presence of *some dwellings*, although there was no floor or clay platform¹⁶. The work done by Valeriu and Galina Cavruc on the Ștefan cel Mare site provided solid data regarding the area and the structure of a typical Coslogeni settlement. Thus, as seen on the plan, the settlement encompasses 14 “ash-pans” clustered north of ash no. 9, which has the largest area. South of it are just four “ash-pans” (1-4). The maximum diameter of these structures range between 10,00-20,00 m. Research conditions have allowed only unveiling the “ash-pan” no. 1, where were unearthed the remains of three huts and 33 pits containing a significant domestic archaeological material consisting of pottery and various bronze, bone, stone and clay artifacts.

¹³ Sebastian Morintz, Niță Anghelescu, *Cultura de tip Coslogeni*, 1970, 377, 398, 403; Sebastian Morintz, *Contribuții I*, 1978, 122, 136, 143.

¹⁴ Valeriu Cavruc, Galina Cavruc, *Ștefan cel Mare (jud. Călărași)*, CCA, Campania 1994, (1995), 90-91. In March 2006, I had the opportunity to discuss with Valeriu Cavruc some details on the content of the findings from Ștefan cel Mare. On the same occasion, the author provided some illustration related to my research and the permission to integrate it in my work. I thank this way for understanding and generous help.

¹⁵ Sebastian Morintz, Niță Anghelescu, *Cultura de tip Coslogeni*, 1970, 290, 379-381, 386, 388; Sebastian Morintz, *Contribuții I*, 1978, 126, 136.

¹⁶ Marian Neagu, Dan Basarab Nanu, *op. cit.*, 1986, 104. A further opinion has been made in 1995 when the authors of research in 1992 to 1993 stated that the platforms (2) "could not serve as dwellings floorings"; Valeriu Cavruc, Marian Neagu, *Date noi privind stratigrafia Grădiștei Coslogeni*, CCDJ, XIII-XIV, 1995, 77. Almost the same view was also expressed in 1976 in a well known monography devoted to the beginning of Iron Age from the Lower Danube; Bernhard Hänsel, *Hallstattzeit*, 73. The remark arising from these views cause further on disputed and diverse nature of the “ash-pans” destination in the area of North-West Pontic coast.

In practice, it appears that the communities tried to adapt to the environmental conditions specific to the Lower Danube, where the landscape varied from the flattened hills in Dobrudja to the flooded banks of the Danube, an area where sandy islets have been used for raising settlements. However, there was a preference for lowlands, open generally on the southern slopes, exposed to sunlight for a longer time. One of the exceptions is represented by the habitation within the Coslogeni level in the Iron Age settlement from *Garvăn-Mlăjitul Florilor*, in North-Western Dobrogea. This is located on a rocky promontory whose habitable surface was of 2,50 ha. West and south edges are bounded by the water pond Jijila¹⁷. Such location of the settlement shows again the ability of the communities to adapt to differentiated ecological microzones. Under the same category of exception might be included the Bronze Age settlement of Radovanu, considered a Coslogeni cultural inheritance or the result of an acculturation phenomenon. This settlement is situated on a plateau on the high bank of the Argeș River, about 20 km north of the Danube valley. The plateau on this terrace appeared to have been carefully chosen, being “naturally” shielded on all sides, dominating visually the entire area. These cardinal features are closely linked to the basic occupations which ensure the survival of communities, ranging between livestock and agriculture. They were completed with other lucrative activities, such as hunting, fishing, exchange activities, largely determined by environmental conditions. The location of many of these settlements in the proximity of large watercourses or even on the Danube riverbank, on the sand banks of the flooded area, suggests that one of the subsistence sources was coming from the exploitation of fords or other places for crossing the streams. Payment of such services would have been done in the fairly numerous bronze items found in the proximity of the Danube¹⁸.

Dwellings and household annexes

Although research in the eponymous settlement has been conducted for more than 30 years, we still do not have a standard set of dwelling characteristics. The authors of the research at *Grădiștea Coslogeni-La Clinici* pointed out the existence of „a large building with three levels of habitation and restoration of the clay platform reinforced with adobe”. North-south side is more than 40 meters long¹⁹. On some other occasion, the same building was referred to as a building with several level of flooring that preserve a part of the walls. The floor (with a thickness ranging from 3,00 to 14,00 cm) is interrupted by traces of poles²⁰. There is also a final assessment on the destination of this complex: it has been suggested

¹⁷ Alexandru Barnea, Gabriel Jugănar, Mihai Ionescu, *Garvăn-Dinogetia*, CCA, Campania 1994 (1995), 31-32.

¹⁸ The communities did not dominate any rich sources of raw material. Thus, there is still work to accomplish in order to prove a local metallurgy in the area of Coslogeni group.

¹⁹ Marian Neagu, Valentin Parnic, Eugen Paveleț, Stănică Pandrea, Cătălin Lazăr, *Grădiștea (com. Grădiștea, jud. Călărași)*, CCA, Campania 2000, (2001), 96.

²⁰ Marian Neagu, Valentin Parnic, Stănică Pandrea, *Grădiștea (com. Grădiștea, jud. Călărași)*, CCA, Campania 2002 (2003), 254.

that it represented a range of buildings and facilities (which can not be considered a dwelling), on which layers of ash and earth²¹ were deposited.

The data regarding the dwellings and household annexes for other settlements is equally incomplete. There are some short notes on precarious dwellings, annexes, on the presence of some splice fragments and pieces of burned adobe fallen from the walls of some houses. These are both on the whole „ash-pan” surface and in the area between the „ash-pans”. Fortunately, in Călărași-Măgureni a hearth could be observed inside a hut as well as other overlapped hearths together with a burnt adobe wall, as shown in the situation at Dorobanțu (Ialomița County)²². Some additional data on the manner of fitting the houses come from the research of an „ash-pan settlement” from Crăsani (Balaci commune, Ialomița County). Here were observed, alongside a floor of raw clay, some fragments of walls with traces of twigs, architectural components that test a potential dwelling area²³. Supplementary data regarding the habitation structures and household annexes was brought to light by excavations in South-Western Dobrudja from Bugeac-Ghețarie (Constanța County). Here were unearthed „two pits”, which in size and shape were considered „rather pit-houses than simple domestic pits”²⁴. In the same context has been investigated a household pit containing animal bones, ashes, fragments of adobe and fragments from a burning platform with holes for air circulation, originating from an oven²⁵. Within the eponymous settlement together with the „ash-pan” no. 1 were investigated in 1993 and 1994 three bell-shaped pits whose fillings consist of pottery fragments and animal bones. These data suggest the domestic nature of these related facilities²⁶.

The continuation and extension of research led to the amplification of the knowledge about the household annexes specific for Late Bronze Age. In this category are encompassed pits with household destination filled with pottery, bone

²¹ M. Neagu, Valeintin Parnic, Anișoara Topârceanu, Stănică Pandrea, *op. cit.*, 2004, 261.

²² Adobe fragments were collected on the ground from other settlements belonging to this culture. Such traces of habitation were unearthed along with other artifacts at Andolina, Ulmu, Lupșanu; Sebastian Morintz, N.îță Anghelescu, *Cultura de tip Coslogeni*, 1970, 379-404.

²³ Adrian C. Florescu, *Repertoriul culturii Noua-Coslogeni din România. Așezări și necropole*, CCDJ, IX, 1991, 148 and the bibliography.

²⁴ The first of these pits has a length of 3,05 m and 1,50 m in depth to the current level. The second pit has a length of 1,50 m and a depth of about 1,00 m. However, there are no clear indications (potholes, floors, adobe fragments) to support this hypothesis; Mihai Irimia, *Observații privind epoca bronzului în Dobrogea în lumina unor cercetări recente*, SCIVA, 32, 3, 1981, 353-354, pl. 1, 2, (347-369).

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 254, pl. 1. recently, the content of the pit no. 2 (fragments from a burning grill) from Bugeac-Ghețarie (jud. Constanța) was interpreted as belonging to a potter's kiln. At the same occasion, was presented a scrap of another grill belonging to a potter kiln from the „ash-pan” at Lupșanu; Christian F. Schuster, Alexandra Comșa, Traian Popa, *op. cit.*, 2001, 45 and footnotes 313 and 314.

²⁶ Valeriu Căvruc, Marian Neagu, *Grădiștea Coslogeni (jud. Călărași)*, CCA, Campania 1994, (1995), 38.

fragments, shells, fish bones. Two of these household pits present traces of previous arrangements, meaning that the edge was reinforced either by coated clay or its bottom was reinforced by treading and burning²⁷. The same type of arrangement was found also at Ștefan cel Mare (Călărași County) where in the space between the „ash-pans” were found 20 bell-shaped pits²⁸. Their filling is completed with ash, animal bones, pieces of adobe and slag.

Although with an uncertain functionality, here could be included the household pit/warehouse consisting of four storage vessels assigned to Coslogeni pottery group researched at Dedulești-Mircea Vodă (Brăila County). The pit has a diameter of 1,50 m and the depth of 1,00 m and contains fragments from the bottom of the aforementioned vessels together with some fragmentary pieces from an oven²⁹. Within the same category of uncertain assignments could be included the ritual pit from Căscioarele-*Valea Coșarului*³⁰, where among the debris of the pit no. 1 were found fragmentary vessels, a possible portable fireplace and four statuettes (a whole one and three fragmentary).

The archaeological data, although incomplete or unevenly published indicate some general patterns, which characterized the founding of settlements in this period. Thus, it appears that this group has efficiently used the habitat conditions from the inferior part of the Lower Danube. Settlements are located on elevated places (hillocks, knolls) or even on denudated heights³¹. In the first category may also be included the settlement of Stelnica-*Grădiștea Mare*³² located on a hillock of about 15 ha that amounts up to 2 m from the environment.

There are certain exceptions, for example the fortified settlement from Axintele (Ialomița County), dated to the second phase of the Coslogeni group. This is located within the area marked by the Ialomița river and the Danube valley, on a high terrace of the river, with an area of approximately 6,50 ha. The defensive system consisted of the steep slopes of the terrace and a moat (16,50 m in opening and 4,60 m deep), that closes the triangle encompassing the settlement³³. Into the same framework, it may also be included the findings belonging to Sabatinovka-Noua-Coslogeni culture from Jijila-*Cetățuia* (Tulcea County). They are located on

²⁷ Marian Neagu, Valentin Parnic, *Grădiștea Coslogeni (com. Roseți, jud. Călărași)*, CCA, Campania 2001, (2002), 148-149.

²⁸ According to the latest information, they are 33 holes of rectangular and bell-shaped shape. Kindly information, Valeriu Cavruc, April 2006.

²⁹ Valeriu Sirbu, *O descoperire aparținând culturii Coslogeni de la Dedulești, județul Brăila (groapă – „depozit de vase”?)*, Istros VI, 1992, 257-258, pl. 1-2.

³⁰ Christian F. Schuster, Alexandra Comșa, Traian Popa, *op. cit.*, 2001, 43, pl. 24.

³¹ See Enisala (Tulcea County) where traces of Bronze Age habitation were found in the place Palanca (7,00 m height and a diameter of 115 m); Sebastian Morintz, Niță Anghelescu, *Cultura de tip Coslogeni*, 1970, 403.

³² Niculae Conovici, Anca Ganciu, Gheroghe Matei, *Stelnica (com. Stelnica, jud. Ialomița, punctul Grădiștea Mare)*, CCA, Campania 2001 (2002), 297-301.

³³ Anca Păunescu, Elena Rența, *Contribution à la connaissance des habitats de la culture Coslogeni dans la vallée de Ialomița*, CCDJ, X, 1993, 193-195.

the top of a natural and artificial fortified plateau dominating the surrounding area from a height at 175 m³⁴.

Data that is more extensive were provided by the research on the right bank of the Danube at Tutrakan–*Gyaur Punar*, which may be considered a „mirror settlement” of the *Grădiştea* Coslogeni. Here, the settlement is situated on a plateau with a height of 80 m. A building was excavated whose traces are discernible as a pattern of two rows of pot holes which seems to be oriented NE-SW and SE-NW. Two pits have been found in the proximity of these structures. Their stock is characteristic of the Late Bronze Ages (Coslogeni group)³⁵.

The south-east extremity of this pottery group is represented by the findings from Yagnilo (Varna), where in the survey area no. 4-7 the basis of a strengthened stone wall containing pottery fragments was investigated. This site was assigned, based on pottery analogies, to the Late Bronze Age, during the same period with the findings of Emen, Ruse, Ezerovo in Bulgaria and the findings of the second phase of the Sabatinovka-Noua-Coslogeni³⁶. Approximately from the same zone came the discoveries from Durankulak (Bulgaria), which provided new data regarding the architecture of dwelling structures. Here, at *Golemija Ostrov*, quasi-rectangular shape dwellings ended in an apse were investigated, whose „foundations” were of stone, a less common situation for the western and south-western variant of the alleged cultural complex³⁷.

According to the remains of the dwellings and the appreciable quantity of ash, I believe that shelters, houses, at least the roofs, were made of material with a rapid combustion, abundantly present in the area. Fragments of coarse plaster surface and of burnt adobe suggest that they were strengthened with another raw material easily found and processed. As for the purpose and use of the „ash-pans”, ethnographic and archaeological data advanced multiple purposes, according to the wishes of local communities. A careful interpretation shows that many of these „ash-pans” had a cultic utility or were designed to consecrate the place. It was the researchers from the Republic of Moldova who mainly advanced this hypothesis, and undertook detailed analysis of these structures. At Cobîlnea, in the Prut-Dniestr interface, there was a quadripartite tendency for organizing the space within the „ash-pan”, as suggested by the ordered layout of the offerings divided into sectors³⁸. The majority of the Romanian researchers have adopted the A. C.

³⁴ Gavrilă Simion, *Jijila, com. Jijila, jud. Tulcea. Punct Cetăţuia (La movila popii Isac)*, CCA, Campania 2001, (2002), 177, pl. 69.

³⁵ Stefan Alexandrov, Nikolai Sirakov, Bysserka Gaidarska, E. Petkov, *Trial Excavations of a Bronze Age Site near Tutrakan (North-Eastern Bulgaria)*, ArchBulg, II, 1998, 3, 7-10, pl.1, 3-4 (7-31).

³⁶ Goranka Tončeva, *Fouilles d'une necropole et d'un site de l'Âge du bronze récent du village Yagnilo, dép. de Varna, Thracia, IV, 1977, 149-151, pl. II (147-164, 160-163)*.

³⁷ Henrieta Todorova, *Istorija na Dobroudža I*, 1984, 64-65, 68-69 with illustration.

³⁸ For a broader discussion of this finding and the significance of the „ash-pans”, space and the orderly manner to deposit the offerings, see Oleg G. Levičchi, Eugen N. Sava, *Nouvelles recherches des établissements de la culture Noua dans la zone comprise entre le Prout et le*

Florescu's view and that advanced by former Soviet Union researchers, according to which the „ash-pans” represent traces of dwelling structures³⁹. I. T. Dragomir, expressed a different view⁴⁰ and, by analyzing a series of ethnographic sources, believed that the „ash-pans” resulted from burning cattle dung around the temporary shelter.

Some closings

Unfortunately, to this moment, we have rather insufficient data to set the features for the issue of settlements, dwellings and household annexes specific for this group. However, the limited number and the very often-fortuitous character of these discoveries and the location of the Coslogeni group in a Western Black Sea passageway point out to a seasonal nature of these shelters. Moreover, the obvious similarities between Sabatinovka and Coslogeni groups plead for the idea that the latter might be considered as an southern or south-western extension on the road to the rich southern lands. In this scenario, the settlements of Tutrakan⁴¹ and Yagnilo⁴² acted as bridgeheads for facilitating the access to south. It is not excluded that these, along with settlements on the left bank, have played a major role in controlling the Lower Danube area, holding absolute power in the Danube fords area or of the large rivers. This latest hypothesis is in accordance with the impressive number of animal bone fragments unearthed within the inhabited areas or in the proximity of these. I think this might explain the abundance of metal objects south of the Danube, in comparison with the Coslogeni group itself, an area that stand out through the reduced amount of metal artifacts.

As it can be seen, the south-east of Muntenia is characterized by scarcity of housing structures⁴³ an assumption based on the reduced amount of housing debris and of the related annexes. A different pattern presents itself south of the Danube, in the north-east corner of Bulgaria, especially at Durankulak, where one notices

Nistru, Archaeological research CCDJ, X, 1993, 135-136 and bibliography. Among the causes of significant presence of the ash in the archaeological sites of this period was inoked the extensive economy which require periodic abandonment and land use planning, in this case by fire; Kalin Porožanov, *Les habitats et les demeures proto-thrace et thrace en Europe du sud-est aux III^e-II^e mill. av. J-C.*, Studies on settlement life in ancient Thrace. Proceedings of the IIIrd International Symposium „Cabyle”, 17-21 May 1993, Jambol (1994), 24.

³⁹ *Contra* Adrian C.Florescu, *Contribuții la cunoașterea culturii Noua*, AM II-III, 1964, 146-147. A similar view that support domestic nature of these arrangements has been made by the research team (Morintz and Angheliescu) of Coslogeni; *Supra* n. 7.

⁴⁰ Ion T. Dragomir, *Contribuții arheologice și etnogafice referitoare la procesul de formare al așezărilor de tip cenușar*, Danubius, X, 1981, 234-235.

⁴¹ S. Alexandrov, Nikolai Sirakov, Bysserka Gaidarska, E. Petkov, *op.cit.*, 1998, 7-31.

⁴² Goranka Tončeva, *Fouilles d'une necropole et d'un site de l'âge du bronze récent du village Yagnilo (départ. de Varna)*, Thracia IV, 1977, 147-182.

⁴³ It is not excluded that this situation espress, in fact, the stage and the manner to investigate archaeological sites belonging to Late Bronze Age in the area; Valeriu Cavruc, Marian Neagu, *op. cit.*, 1995, 71-78, pl. I-Ia, II.

elaborated housing structures. Here, the settlement occupies an islet and consist of six dwellings with an apse built up in four phases, whose walls were preserved to a height of 0,50 m⁴⁴. This time, they are situated in favourable positions (Tutrakan on the Danube) or benefits of friendly habitat conditions (Durankulak). In the latter case, one can speak even about an „architectural tissue”, the prevailing use of lasting building materials. The apses of some of the buildings remind us of the existence of an architectural prototype in the North Pontic world, in the Sabatinovka area or of some influences from southern area from the periphery of the Mycenaean world⁴⁵, which is not so far.

⁴⁴ Henrieta Todorova, *Die Spätbronzezeitliche Siedlung auf der „Großen Inseln” bei Durankulak (Bulgarien)*, Bohuslav Chropovsky, Joachim Hermann (Hrsg.), Beiträge zum bronzezeitlichen Burgembau in Mitteleuropa, Berlin-Nitra, 1982, 417-425.

⁴⁵ For the analogies with the North Pontic world, in the area of Sabatinovka culture, although there are more complicated and developed buildings, see Igor T. Černjákov, *Severo-Zapadnoe Pričernomorje vo vtoroj polovinie II tys. Do. N. E.*, 1985, pl. 10; Magda Piniažek-Sikora, *Neue Anregungen zur Diskussion über die Beziehungen zwischen Troia und dem nordwestpontischen Gebiet*, in: Rustem Aslan, Stephan Blum, Gabrielle Kasti, Frank Schweizer, Diane Thumm (Hrs.), *Mauerschau. Festschrift für Manfred Korfmann*, Band 2, Remshalden-Grünbach, (2002) 710-713, pl. 6 (705-716). Regarding the possible influence of the southern world may be considered the many similar buildings in Central Macedonia. Some suggestions as regard some similarities between the Eastern Balkans and the neighboring area in the Middle and Late Bronze Age were made at the beginning of the 80's by Rumen Katincharov, *Relations culturelles entre la Thrace, la Grèce, et l'Anatolie du nord-ouest a l'âge du bronze moyene et recent*, in: Jan Best, Nanny de Vries (eds.) *Thracians and Mycenaeans: Proceedings of the Fourth International Congress of Thracology*, Rotterdam, 24-26 September 1984, 1989, 68-85.