

# Late Copper Age and Bronze Age Tumuli in the North-Eastern Part of Brăila Plain and Covurlui Plain

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**Abstract:** *The tumulus as a funerary monument makes its appearance at the end of the Copper Age – beginning of the Bronze Age and it is present in the funerary practices at the Lower Danube until the migration times inclusively. On one hand, this practice of “marking” the surface would have reminded the community the rank of the deceased, on the other hand, it could have played a role in defining the territory the community had under control.*

*In the present state of research, we cannot presume for the southern part of Moldova and north-eastern part of Muntenia the existence of an aristocracy / warrior elite mirrored in the funerary practice of inhumation under tumuli. It is evident that not all the community members “benefited” of such a treatment. The tumuli have variable dimensions. Usually around a big tumulus smaller ones are present. It remains to be discussed to what degree nomadic populations, moving on very large territories in search of pastures had rooted in their world’s view the affirmation of territorial rights.*

*The tumulus complexes of the Galați county were relatively well excavated in comparison with other areas, but their number is almost insignificant compared to the number of the identified tumuli.*

*Looking at the tumuli arrangement in space on the map of the Brăila and Galați counties clear alignments can be noticed, which mark the moving forward of those tribes in this space, just in the same way in which during Roman times tumuli were marking the sides of a road. Most probably such “marks”, besides illustrating a social hierarchy and/or territorial control, had a role in field orientation. Certainly there is no coincidence in the fact the richest areas in such monuments are in the Gerului valley (at the limit between the Covurlui Plain and Tecuci Plain), at the southern extremity of the Covurlui Plain, on the Buzău valley and especially on the Danube valley, all these territories being rich in pastures and water sources.*

*The researches conducted on the tumuli with red ochre show that this category is characterised by a great variety, reflected in their inventory and structures. Since the beginning, the archaeologists agreed that the representatives of the ochre Tumulus culture were of Eastern origin, coming from the North Pontus steppes. The researches conducted in the northern part of the Caucasus and the northern part of the Black Sea revealed a rich archaeological material belonging to this phenomenon, which helped in establishing the chronology and evolution of these cultures. The specific funerary rite of the North Pontus tribes is based on the inhumation in a crouched position on the back or one side, the presence of the red ochre and simple or tumulus graves.*

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**Rezumat:** Tumulul, ca monument funerar, apare la finele eneoliticului și începutul epocii bronzului și va fi prezent în practicile funerare de la Dunărea de Jos inclusiv în perioada migrațiilor. Pe de o parte, această practică a ridicării unor „marcaje” la suprafața solului ar fi avut menirea să amintească membrilor comunității statutul ierarhic al defunctului, iar pe de altă parte se poate sugera un anumit rol în definirea teritoriului controlat de comunitatea respectivă.

În actualul stadiu al cercetărilor, în sudul Moldovei și nord-estul Munteniei, nu putem vorbi despre existența unei aristocrații/elite războinice oglindite sub aspectul practicilor funerare în înhumarea tumulară. Este evident că nu toți (sau nu oricare dintre) membrii comunității „beneficiau” de un astfel de tratament. Tumulii au dimensiuni variabile. De obicei în jurul unui tumul mare sunt dispuși alții mai mici. Este discutabil în ce măsură populații migratoare, care pendulează pe spații foarte largi în căutarea locurilor de pășunat, și-au încetățenit în mentalul colectiv afirmarea „dreptului de posesiune” teritorială. Complexele tumulare din județul Galați au fost investigate relativ bine în comparație cu alte zone, dar aproape nesemnificativ raportat la numărul tumulilor identificați.

Privind dispunerea tumulilor pe harta județelor Brăila și Galați observăm adevărate alinamente care jalonează căile de pătrundere în acest spațiu ale triburilor respective, așa cum în epoca romană complexele funerare sunt plasate de o parte și de alta a unui drum. Foarte probabil aceste „marcaje”, eventual pe lângă ilustrarea unei ierarhii sociale și/sau a controlului asupra unui teritoriu, aveau un rol în orientarea în teren. Evident că nu este întâmplător faptul că zonele cele mai bogate în astfel de monumente se află pe valea Gerului (la limita dintre Câmpia Covurluiului și Câmpia Tecuciului), la extremitatea meridională a Câmpiei Covurluiului ori pe valea Buzăului și mai ales a Dunării, adică acele teritorii bogate în pășuni și surse de apă.

Studiul mormintelor tumulare cu ocră arată că acestea prezintă o mare varietate, ținând seama de inventarul lor și de tipurile de amenajări. Încă de la început, toți cercetătorii au fost de acord că purtătorii culturii mormintelor tumulare cu ocră sunt de origine răsăriteană, din stepile nord-pontice. Cercetările din nordul Caucazului și din nordul Mării Negre au scos la iveală un bogat material arheologic cu privire la populațiile și la obiceiurile funerare ale purtătorilor mormintelor tumulare cu ocră. În urma acestor cercetări s-au putut stabili etapele cronologice și evoluția culturilor. Ritul funerar specific triburilor nord-pontice este înhumarea în poziție chirchită pe spate sau pe o parte, cu ocră roșu, în cimitire plane sau tumulare.

**Key words:** Bronze Age, tumulus, funerary beliefs.

**Cuvinte cheie:** epoca bronzului, tumuli, rit funerar.

The tumulus was used as a funeral monument starting with the end of Copper Age and the beginning of the Bronze Age and was present in the funeral practices at the Lower Danube up to the migrations period. On one hand, this practice of raising marks above the ground would serve to remind the community members of the hierarchic status of the deceased, while on the other hand, it may suggest a certain role in defining the territory under the influence of the respective community<sup>1</sup>.

In the present stage of research in the south of Moldavia and north-east of Muntenia, we cannot speak of the existence of a warlike aristocracy/elite mirrored in

<sup>1</sup> Teodorescu 2011, 41-47.

the funeral practice of interment in tumulus. Obviously, not all the members of a community were interred in tumuli. The tumuli had variable sizes. Usually, a larger tumulus was surrounded by smaller ones. It is debatable to what extent did the migrant populations appropriate in the collective mindset the affirmation of the rights of territorial possession, given that they moved on large area, seeking for pastures.

The tumulus complexes from Galați County have been relatively well surveyed when compared to other areas, however, insignificantly in relation to the number of tumuli identified.

If one looks at the arrangement of the tumuli on the maps of the present day counties of Galați and Brăila, one notes genuine alignments on the entrance ways in the areas of the respective tribes, similarly to the Roman practice of placing funeral monuments on the sides of the road. Besides the indication of social hierarchy and/or territorial control, these marks played, undoubtedly, a part in the orientation in the field. It is definitely not arbitrary that the areas where most of these monuments have been discovered are situated on Gerului valley (the boundaries between Covurlui and Tecuci plains), at the southern end of Covurlui Plain, on Buzău and especially Danube valley, areas rich in pastures and water sources. The majority of tumuli surveyed in the north-east of the Romanian Plain and in the south area of Covurlui Plain belong to Yamnaya, Katakobnaja și Mnogovalikovaja cultures.

For the clarification of the relations between the aforementioned cultures, also very important is the finding from Liești (T<sub>78</sub>, *Movila Arbănașu*), where the main grave (M<sub>22</sub>) belonged to a mature man, lying on the right side, with the head turned to west. The inventory consists of two pottery recipients, one specific to the Gordinești type, the other, to Foltești cultural aspect. The interments subsequent to M<sub>22</sub> are Yamnaya graves (pit-graves). In Găvani – tumulus T03, an ochre grave belonging to Foltești II culture has been discovered. Also, in Stoicani–*Cetățuia*, the anteriority of habitual traces belonging to Foltești aspect has been noted in comparison to the ochre graves discovered in the same area<sup>2</sup>.

The only grave of Eastern origin with the deceased buried lying on the abdomen has been identified in the necropolis from Stoicani (M<sub>13</sub>). It is considered a transition element towards the position “crouched on the side with chest distortion”, being included in the VI A<sup>3</sup> variant of tumuli. Interment graves with ochre, Yamnaya type, have been identified in Stoicani, Grivița, Galați (*Dunărea neighbourhood*), Liești, Șendreni, Șerbeștii Vechi, Vânători, and Vlădești. Some pieces in the graves from Brăilița present analogies to the pottery discovered in the Yamnaya graves north from

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<sup>2</sup> Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1953a, 112-132.

<sup>3</sup> Burtănescu 1996, 103.

the Black Sea. Red ochre has been identified in six graves (three adult graves and three for children)<sup>4</sup>.

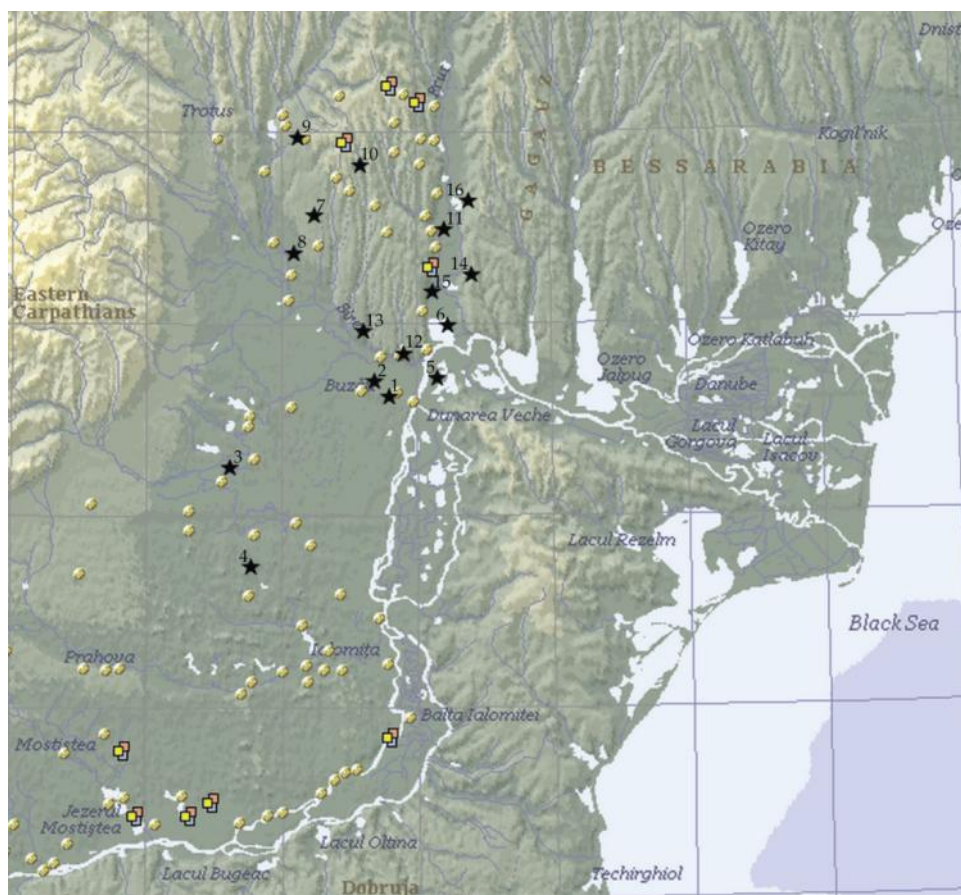


Figure 1. Discoveries Map, Brăila County. 1. Baldovinești; 2. Găvani; 3. Horia; 4. Roșiori; 5. Brăilița. Galați County: 6. Galați; 7. Grivița; 8. Liești; 9. Matca; 10. Măcișeni; 11. Stoicani; 12. Șendreni; 13. Șerbeștii Vechi; 14. Tulucești; 15. Vânători; 16. Vlădești.

<sup>4</sup> Harțuche 2002, 134.

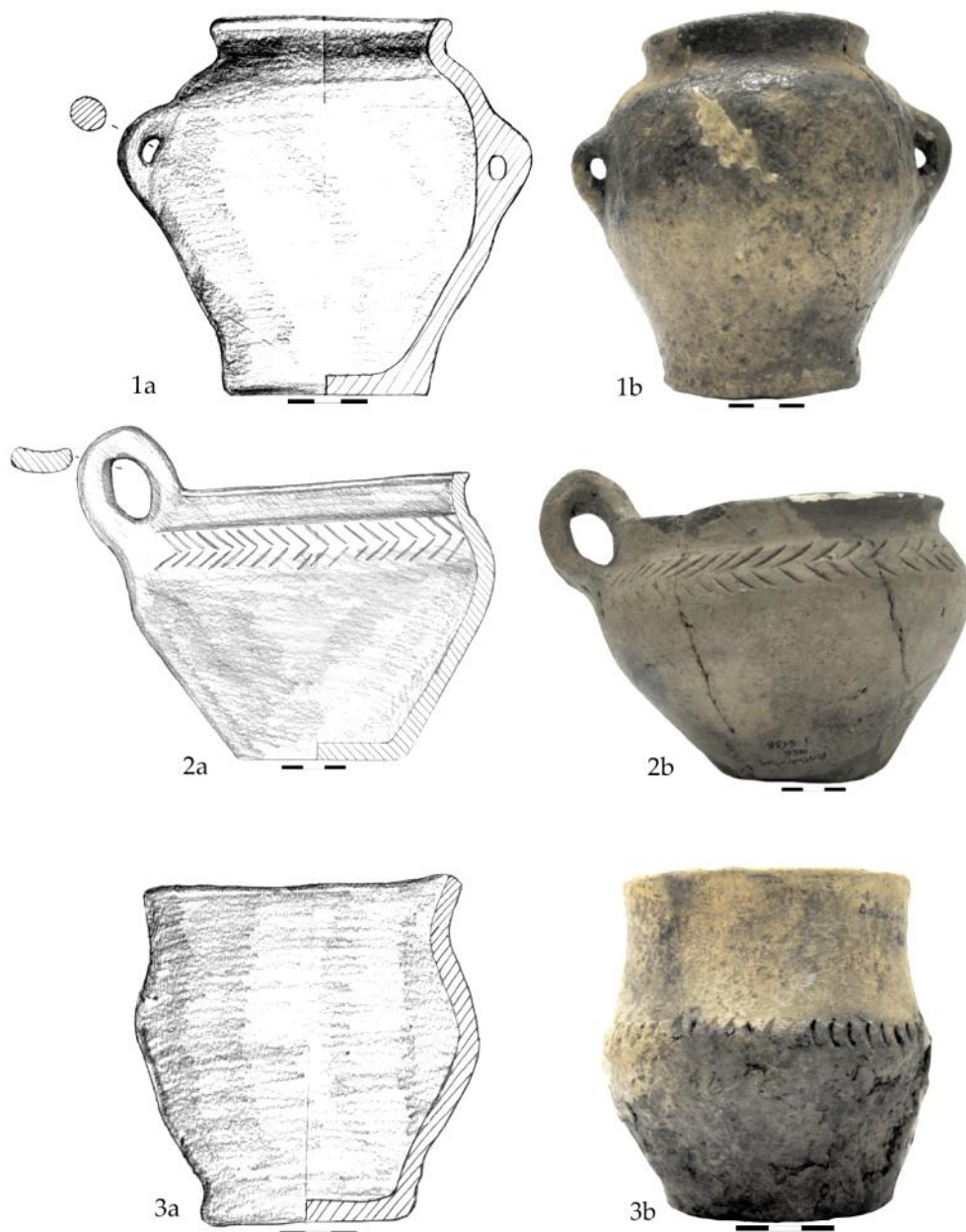


Figure 2. Baldovinești, Brăila County, pottery inventory. 1. tomb no. 14; 2. tomb no. 15; 3. Tomb no. 16; Mnogovalikovaja Culture.

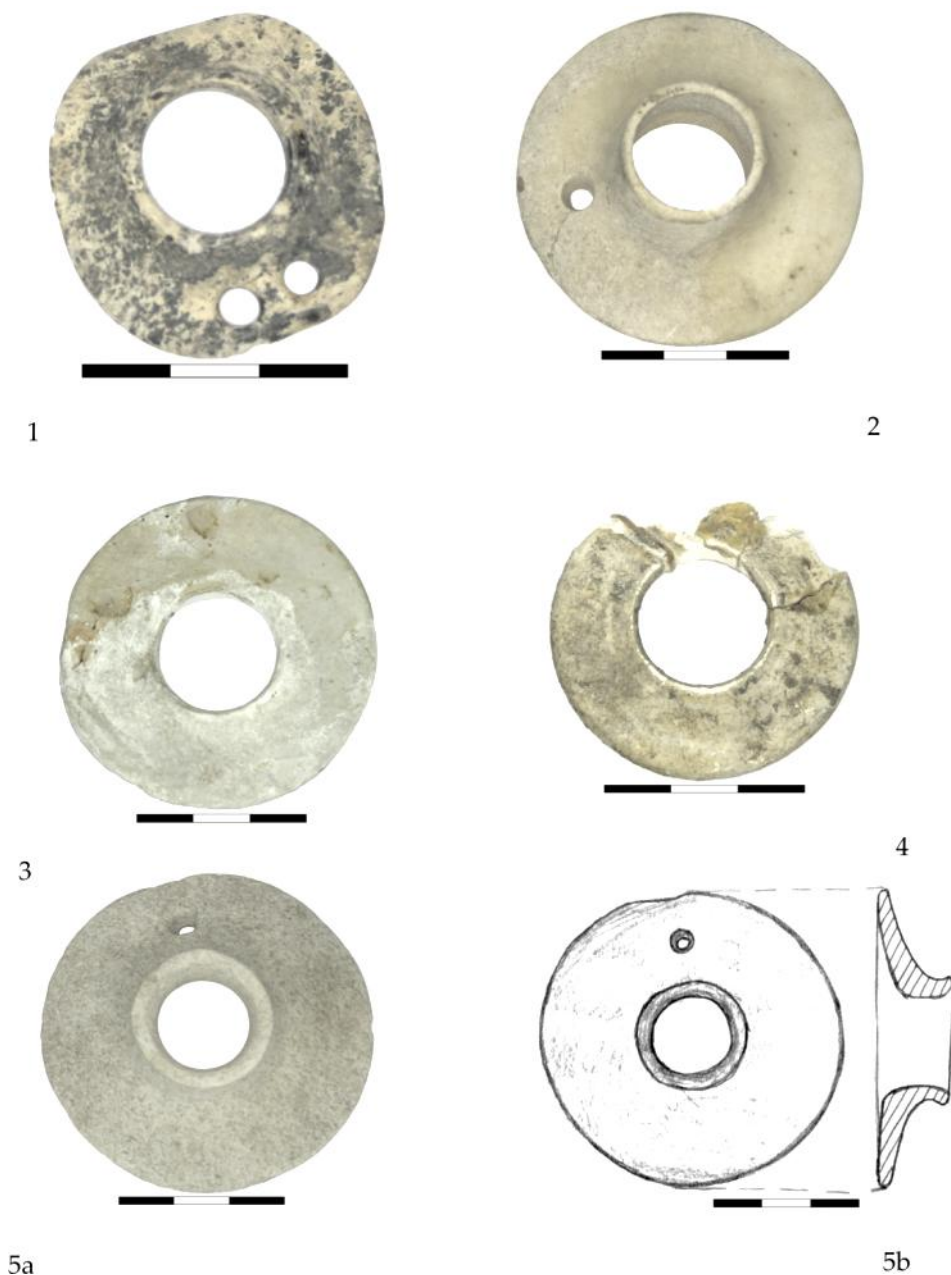


Figure 3. Bones discoid buckles from Brăila County. 1. Baldovinești, 2. Brăilița (tomb no. 86), 3. Brăilița (tomb no. 98), 4. Brăilița (tomb no. 158), 5. Brăilița (tomb no. 37).





Figure 4. Gemenele/Găvani, Brăila County. Tumulus T03, tomb no. 1.

The survey of the ochre tumulus graves has proven that they present a large variety, considering their arrangement and inventories. From the very beginning, all researchers agreed that the bearers of the ochre tumulus graves have eastern origins, coming from the steppes north from the Black Sea<sup>5</sup>. The research conducted north from Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea has revealed a rich archaeological material providing information concerning the populations and the funeral rites of the bearers of the ochre grave culture. This research could determine the chronological stages and the evolution of the cultures. The funeral rite specific to the tribes north from the Black Sea is the interment in crouched position, lying down or on the side, with red ochre, in plain or tumulus graves.

At the Lower Danube and in the eastern part of Moldavia, the relative chronological data indicate, for the first part of the classical Yamnaya period, which includes the oldest Yamnaya pit-graves, contemporaneity with the phases Foltești II – Cernavodă II, Orlea-Sadovec – Coțofeni I (partially)<sup>6</sup>. The first Yamnaya arrivals east from Balkans are dated prior to the beginning of the settlement in Ezero, but, in general, the first part of the classical Yamnaya period is synchronous with the Ezero stage A1 (level XIII-XII) and completely anterior to the Ezero-Sozopol phenomenon.

For the second part of the classical Yamnaya period, evidence shows contemporaneity with Cățelu Nou-Coșereni (first stage of Glina) and Zăbala, the early stage of Târpești group<sup>7</sup>.

The final part of the classical Yamnaya and the beginning of the late Yamnaya phase are contemporaneous with Ezerovo. This would signify a chronological parallelism of this final stage of classical Yamnaya / the first part of late Yamnaya, as a whole, with finds belonging to Mlăjeț-Sânzieni-Turia type, with Aldești manifestations, the phase Schneckenberg A and the old habitation of BT from Bogdănești, the Zimnicea-Batin, Coțofeni III group, and the Livezile group<sup>8</sup>.

We do not have our own <sup>14</sup>C dating for Yamnaya culture. For the emergence of this culture at the Lower Danube, significant are the dates from Baia Hamangia (4530±65 BP) and Novoselic (4520/4490±70 BP)<sup>9</sup>. The values from Baia Hamangia and Novoselic are older than the highest (not calibrated) <sup>14</sup>C dates for the XIII horizon from Ezero

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<sup>5</sup> Morintz 1978, 93.

<sup>6</sup> Roman 1976, 167.

<sup>7</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 267.

<sup>8</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 267.

<sup>9</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 270.



(4450 and, respectively, 4430 BP)<sup>10</sup>. Calibrated, the dates for early Ezero supply a value around 3150 BC or 3100 BC.

The dating from Plačidol 2504, if we accept the value a: 4380 (60 BP) has been obtained from a coal sample in a complex probably connected to M<sub>9</sub>/TII (lying on the back). This grave preceded an interment (M<sub>5</sub>), in a grave with a footstep, which probably belongs to the last phases of the classical Yamnaya<sup>11</sup>.

M<sub>3</sub>/TI from Poručik Gešanovo can be attributed to the first part of the classical Yamnaya period. The <sup>14</sup>C dating for this grave, 4360±50 BP, confirms this chronological frame<sup>12</sup>. M<sub>6</sub>/ T11 from Semenovka displays ritualic elements and stratigraphic position in the tumulus which place it in late Yamnaya or at the end of the classical Yamnaya horizon. Hence, 2900 BC also represents the lower limit for the calibrated data from Plačidol and Poručik Gešanovo. The dating for the two sites is close to the ones obtained for the first part of the phase Ezero A.

For the first part of the classical Yamnaya we can propose a time interval from 3150/3100 BC (and a previous one, possibly towards 3200 BC) to 2900-2800 BC. This framing corresponds to the one proposed by H. Parzinger for the horizon 11 of relative chronology, which included Foltești II-Cernavoda II, Coțofeni II and the levels XIII-X from Ezero<sup>13</sup>.

The earliest Yamnaya comings along the Danube and towards the Balkans, related to the early Aegean Bronze Age, are contemporaneous with the beginning of the early Helladic I (3100-3000 BC). The oldest manifestations in the Balkans may have taken place slightly earlier than the Early Helladic I<sup>14</sup>.

For the second part in the evolution of the classical Yamnaya and the beginning of the late Yamnaya, we have the interval 2900/2850-2800 BC<sup>15</sup>. The interval in calibrated years corresponds to Junacite XV-XI/X phase<sup>16</sup>. In relation to the chronology of the Ezero settlement, it indicates synchronism for the second part of the classical Yamnaya period with Ezero B1 (levels VI-IV)<sup>17</sup>. The archaeological facts do not confirm this synchronism.

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<sup>10</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 270.

<sup>11</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 270.

<sup>12</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 271.

<sup>13</sup> Parzinger 1993, 269, 290.

<sup>14</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 272.

<sup>15</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 272.

<sup>16</sup> Bojadžiev 1995, 156.

<sup>17</sup> Bojadžiev 1995, 154-155.

The dating obtained for Ezero are grouped towards the end of the classical Yamnaya period<sup>18</sup>. The askoidal pots from Budjak and Muntenia with prototypes in Ezerovo area are present in Yamnaya sites starting with the final stage of the classical Yamnaya.

The first part of the new sequence of the classical Yamnaya in the north-west of the Black Sea and the Balkans can be synchronised with Sitagroi Va<sup>19</sup>. The end of the classical Yamnaya and a large part of the late Yamnaya is contemporaneous with Sitagroi Vb.

In relation to the late Yamnaya, dates have been obtained for the graves in Novoselic and Višnevoe. After calibration, the dates are placed in the interval 2400/2350 BC - 2150/2050 BC, therefore, late Yamnaya might have taken place from 2600± BC to 2400/2200 BC.

It is possible for the late and final Yamnaya stages to be contemporaneous with Ezero B; in the same interval are the <sup>14</sup>C datings for Junacite IX-III<sup>20</sup>. In Continental Greece, the late Yamnaya period would correspond to early Helladic II<sup>21</sup>, while in the NW of Anatolia, late Troy I -Troy III would take place.

Graves belonging to Katakobnaja culture have been discovered in the tumulus from Baldovinești-Pepinieră<sup>22</sup>. Two of the deceased were lying down on their back, with the legs and arms outstretched, and one was lying on his back, with the arms outstretched near the body and the legs bent from the knees. They contained ochre and had a secondary position in the kurgan<sup>23</sup>.

Three graves from the necropolis from Brăila-Brăilița may belong to Katakobnaja culture. These are:

- M<sub>307</sub>, the grave of an adult, crouched position to the right, east-west oriented. Through its inventory, a vessel with short neck, massive, rounded spout, not decorated, presents analogies to M<sub>13</sub>/T<sub>1</sub> from Glăvăneștii Vechi and to M<sub>11</sub>/T<sub>3</sub> from Budjak<sup>24</sup>.
- In M<sub>144</sub>, the grave of a child, crouched to the left, east-west oriented, a lanyard decorated glass was deposited, with analogies to findings from Hănești and Katakobnaja necropoleis from Crimea<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Nikolova 1999, 401-402.

<sup>19</sup> Renfrew 1971, tab I.

<sup>20</sup> Bojadžiev 1995, 157.

<sup>21</sup> Manning 1995, 170-172.

<sup>22</sup> Harțuche, Anastasiu 1968, 40-52.

<sup>23</sup> Burtănescu 1996, 92.

<sup>24</sup> Harțuche, Anastasiu 1976, fig. 340; Burtănescu 2002, 291.

<sup>25</sup> Harțuche, Anastasiu 1976, 166, fig. 339; Burtănescu 2002, 293.

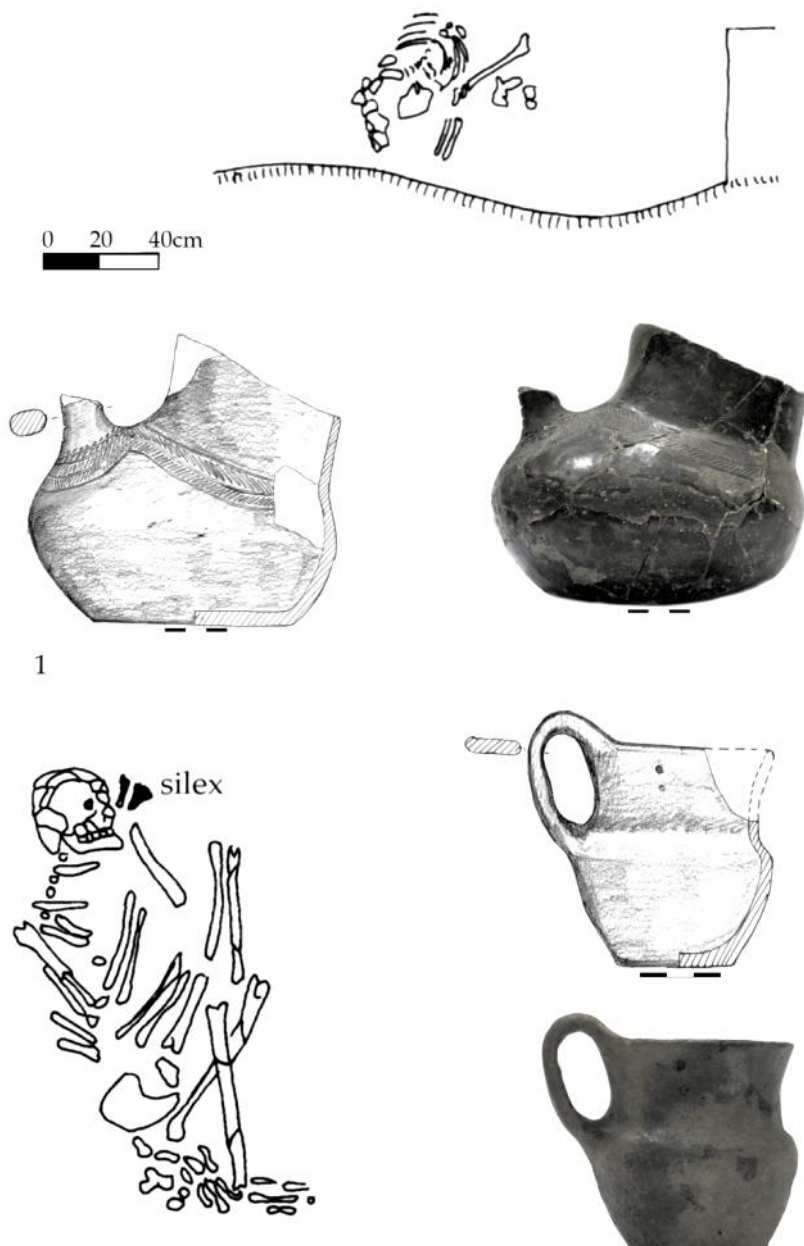


Figure 5. Brăilița, Brăila County, tombs and pottery inventory. 1. tomb no. 18; 2. tomb no. 36, Yamnaya culture.

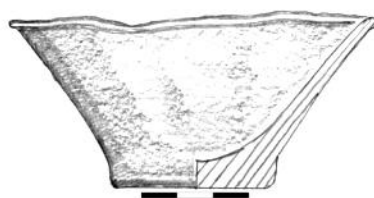
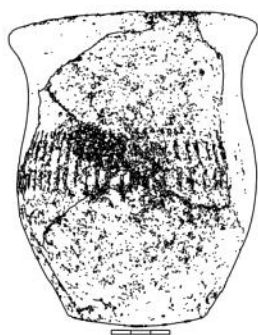


Figure 6. Brăilița, Brăila County, tombs and pottery inventory. 1. tomb no. 27; 2. tomb no. 28, Yamnaya culture.



Figure 7. Brăilița, Brăila County, tombs and pottery inventory. 1. tomb no. 31; 2. tomb no. 34, Yamnaya culture.

- In M<sub>17</sub> there is the skeleton of an adult, lying on his back, and oriented east-west. Near his right foot there was an oval, polished rock comparable to the one discovered in Glăvăneștii Vechi in M<sub>13</sub>/TI and in graves from the eastern area of Katakobnaja<sup>26</sup>.

At *Cetățuia* from Stoicani, two graves have been discovered (M<sub>5</sub> and M<sub>13</sub>) which belong to Katakobnaja culture. Only M<sub>5</sub> has as inventory a fragment of a rock axe<sup>27</sup>.

M<sub>2</sub> from the tumulus from Vânători also belongs to Katakobnaja culture. It is a catacomb grave, with the skeleton in crouched position to the left, east-west oriented (1.2 m depth). In the torso area, a bitronconic vase has been discovered, having a plain end, flared spout, made of grey clay with black spots, and mat surface<sup>28</sup>.

Most of the experts in the Bronze Age place the catacomb graves (Katakobnaja) in the middle part of this period. With a complex structure and requiring considerable efforts, the catacomb graves (side niche) were also used so as to express the social status of the deceased, however, the idea might well have come from the steppes north from the Black Sea, where these graves have been often discovered<sup>29</sup>. The findings from Matca (A<sub>2</sub>) and Stoicani (A<sub>2</sub>) can be attributed to this funeral rite.

For the area we are dealing with, there are only few elements of relative chronology for Katakobnaja culture. In the area between the rivers Pruth and Dniester, the stratigraphic position of the graves from Katakobnaja culture is well represented, following Yamnaya interments. The oldest Katakobnaja cultures north-west from the Black Sea are placed towards the second part of the classical Yamnaya culture<sup>30</sup>.

Some researchers consider that a late Yamnaya population went westward, on the Danube valley as the result of the pressure of the bearers of Katakobnaja culture. Within Zimnicea-Batin group, we encounter graves with skeletons in late Yamnaya positions<sup>31</sup>. The convulsions began at the limit between classical and late Yamnaya, in a period when the first catacomb graves appeared north-west from the Black Sea. It is possible that the convulsions in the south-east of Romania and central Muntenia, in a post-Glina moment, to have the same causes<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 296; Harțuche 2002, 50.

<sup>27</sup> Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1953a, 119, 124-125.

<sup>28</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 139-140; Brudiu 2003, 57.

<sup>29</sup> Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 279.

<sup>30</sup> Dergacev 1986, 110.

<sup>31</sup> Burtănescu 1998, 159-163.

<sup>32</sup> Roman 1982, 47; Roman 1986, 34, 45, 47.





Figure 8. Brăilița, Brăila County, tombs and pottery inventory: 1. tomb no. 10; 2. tomb no. 144, Yamnaya culture.

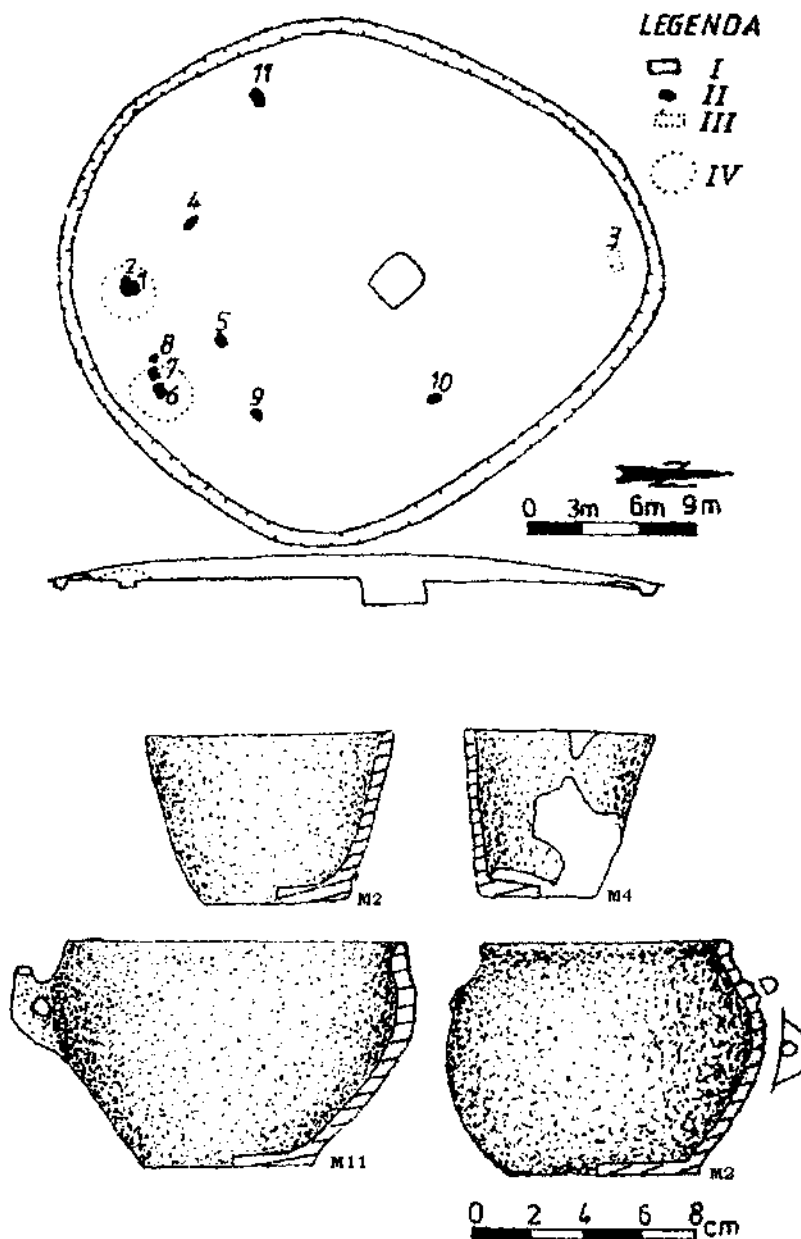


Figure 9. Galați City, *Dunărea Neighbourhood*. A. necropolis plan, Ochre graves; II. Crouched skeleton graves; III. „Our era graves”; IV. Tumulus graves; B. Tumulus no. 258 inventory (Brudiu 1985b).

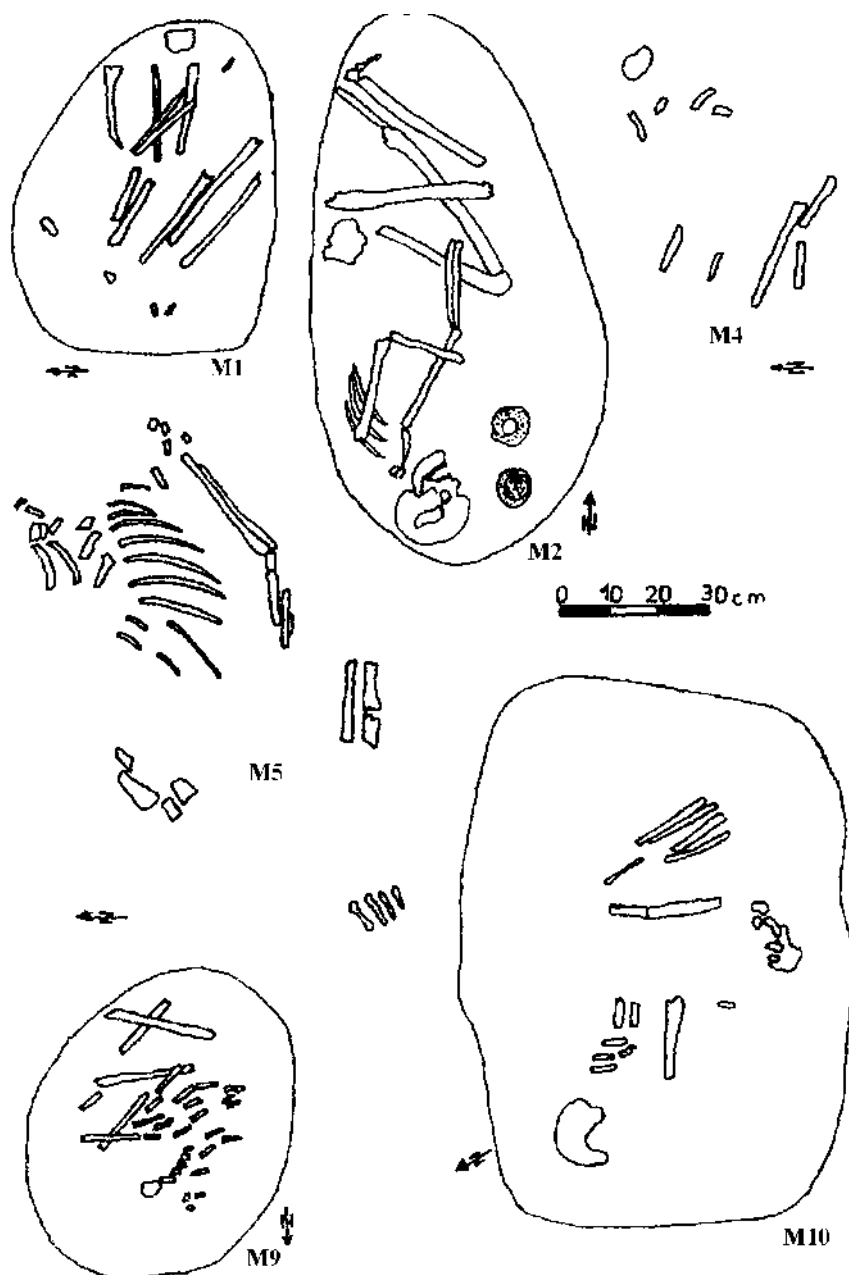


Figure 10. Galați City, *Dunărea Neighbourhood*. Tumulus no. 258 graves (Brudiu 1985b).

The graves with lying skeletons Smeieni, the lanyward motifs with lath from București-Roșu and Sărata Monteoru, frequently identified on Katakobnaja vessel from the late period, confirm this cultural identification. The pieces from București-Roșu, from a Glina settlement, phase III (Govora Village-*Runcuri*) prove that the pressure exercised by the Ingul population (Katakobnaja) might have begun earlier. Evidence in this respect is the occupation by the tribes Glina III of the mountain and pre-mountain areas from Oltenia și Muntenia<sup>33</sup>.

We cannot rule out the parallel evolution, in different areas, of several ritual Katakobnaja groups. A series of inverse stratigraphy instances, reciprocal cultural influences, prove the cultural and territorial co-existence of Yamnaya and Katakobnaja for a period of time<sup>34</sup>.

The lanyward decorated pieces from București-Roșu and Sărata Monteoru represent the only evidence of synchronism of Katakobnaja-Glina-Govora Village-*Runcuri* and Odaia Turcului group (seems to be contemporaneous with the level Ic4, 1 and 2 from Sărata<sup>35</sup>, while in Monteoru Ic3 Katakobnaja is already incorporated in the early stage of Mnovalikovaja). We infer that this culture from the north-west from the Black Sea can be also contemporaneous with the levels Ic4-3 from Sărata-Monteoru.

A series of old findings from Ukraine, different from the ones belonging to Katakobnaja and Srubnaja groups, especially in what pottery was concerned, have led to the introduction of a new concept in historiography: *Kul'tura mnovalikovej keramiki* (=culture of pottery decorated with successive bands)<sup>36</sup>. Mnovalikovaja culture is attested on a large area in the steppes and silvosteppes between the rivers Volga and Prut. The findings from Baldovinești, Stoicani, Lișcoteanca and a number of graves from the necropolis in Brăilița can be framed within this culture. Besides the pottery inventory which includes as defining elements a category of recipients for everyday usage decorated with geometric motives and segments of applied bands, another specific feature is represented by the horn or bones discoid buckles specific to these communities<sup>37</sup>.

For the area we are interested in, graves belonging to Mnovalikovaja culture have been discovered in Baldovinești (*Pepiniera*). The two discoid buckles, the arrow pin with rectangular carving at the base, the curved rock knife (*krummesser*) constitute evidence for the association of these graves to Mnovalikovaja culture<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Schuster 1996, 15-16.

<sup>34</sup> Dergacev 1986, 110; Toščev 1998, 53.

<sup>35</sup> Băjenaru 1998, 86.

<sup>36</sup> Berezanskaja 1957, 28-35; Berezanskaja 1960, 26-41; Berezanskaja 1998, 60-70; Berezanskaja *et alii* 1986; Černjakov 1985; Pâslaru 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 547-560; Sava 1991, 15-37.

<sup>38</sup> Sava 1992.

In Stoicani–Cetățuia, two of the graves can be associated to Mnogovalikovaja culture: M<sub>3</sub> and M<sub>7</sub>. The two graves (M<sub>7</sub> is a double grave) contain discoid buckles in their inventory<sup>39</sup>. M<sub>14</sub> from the tumulus in Vânători can be attributed to the same culture<sup>40</sup>. The grave has been discovered in the coating of the kurgan, the skeleton was crouched to the right, north-south oriented. In the occipital area it contained a vessel of grey-yellow clay, with grinded pottery fragments used as lean material<sup>41</sup>.

For Galați County area, I. Motzoi-Chicideanu attributes the findings from Măcișeni (A), Stoicani (A<sub>2</sub>) and Vânători (A<sub>1</sub>)<sup>42</sup> to Mnogovalikovaja culture; and E. Sava adds the ones from *Dunărea* neighbourhood (F<sub>1</sub>)<sup>43</sup> to the list. Clearly, all the cases refer to funeral findings in tumuli. Only the interment from Măcișeni is isolated (and also unusual, as the absence of the deceased or his traces results from the description!). In other cases, it is about the cultural interpretation of a few sites, two of them (Stoicani and *Dunărea* neighbourhood) respectively three (Vânători), identified among graves from the Bronze Age. On the one hand, the Mnogovalikovaja elements west from the river Prut seem rather rare; on the other hand, the resemblance of the funeral rite with the ones in graves belonging to Yamnaya or Katakobnaja makes the cultural identification difficult in the absence of the characteristic inventory material. As far as the horn or bone discoid buckles are concerned, remarkable are the pieces discovered in Stoicani, Brăilița, and Baldovinești. Only for the later, the material belongs certainly to the funeral inventory of a tumulus.

The western limit of Mnogovalikovaja culture is traditionally drawn along the river Pruth. E. Sava<sup>44</sup> includes the area on the right benches of the river Prut and the northern side of Dobrudja in the western periphery. His opinion is confirmed by the presence of inventory specific to Mnogovalikovaja culture in plane and tumulus necropoleis: horn and bone buckles, archaic discoid cheek-pieces, flint arrow pins with rectangular carving at the base, and pottery.

In a number of necropoleis belonging to Monteoru culture, uncharacteristic graves have been found, as well. In Căndești (Monteoru Ic3) appear the first catacomb graves<sup>45</sup>. The connection to Mnogovalikovaja is apparent from certain inventory elements (bone discoid buckles, Kostrom chipper, cheek-pieces)<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1953a, 118, 120-121.

<sup>40</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 139-140.

<sup>41</sup> Brudiu 2003, 58.

<sup>42</sup> Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 550 [descoperirile de la Vânători sunt incluse atât în lista de atribuire sigure (nr. 83), cât și în cea de atribuire incerte (nr. 91)].

<sup>43</sup> Sava 1992, 188-189.

<sup>44</sup> Sava 1991, 28.

<sup>45</sup> Florescu, Florescu 1983, 113.

<sup>46</sup> Sava 1991, 15-37.

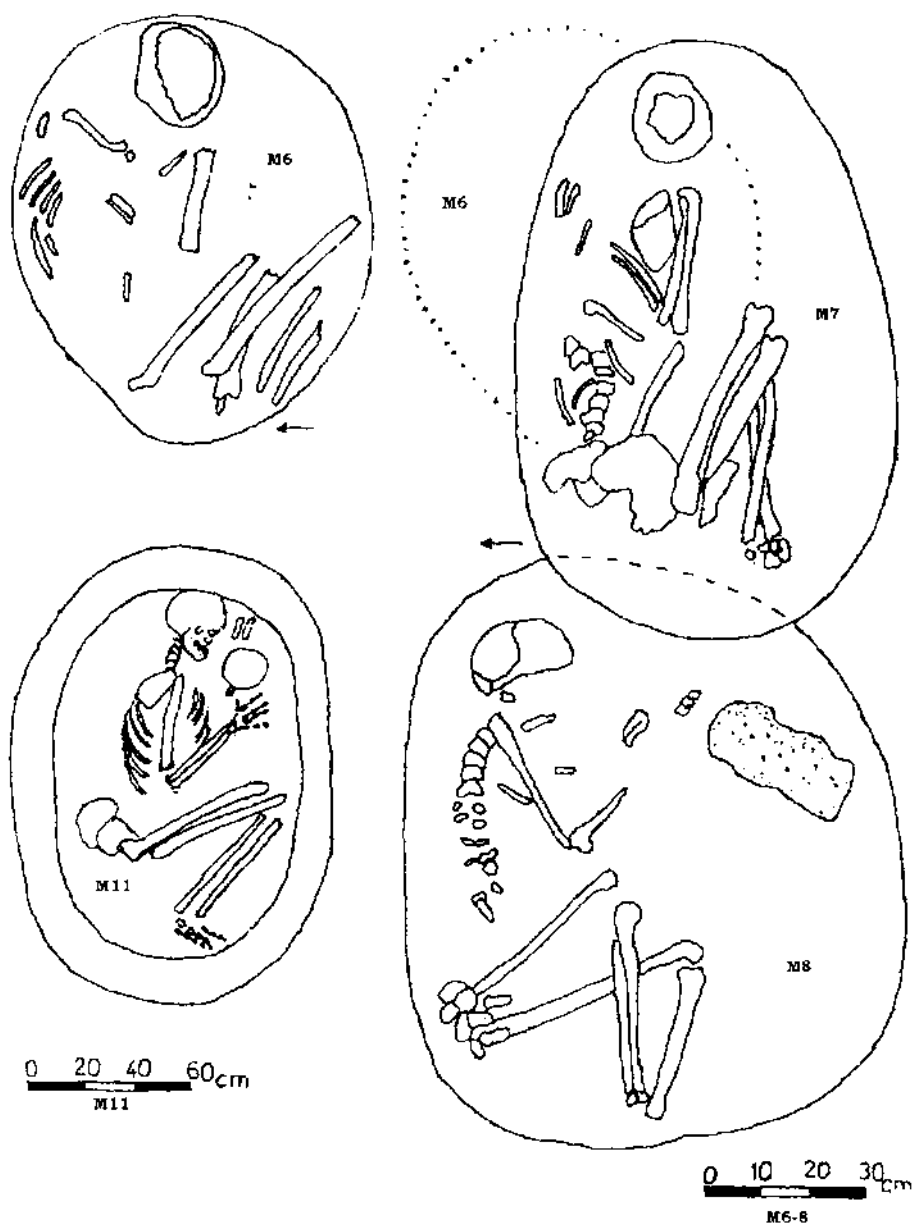


Figure 11. Galați City, *Dunărea Neighbourhood*. Tumulus no. 258 graves (Brudiu 1985b).



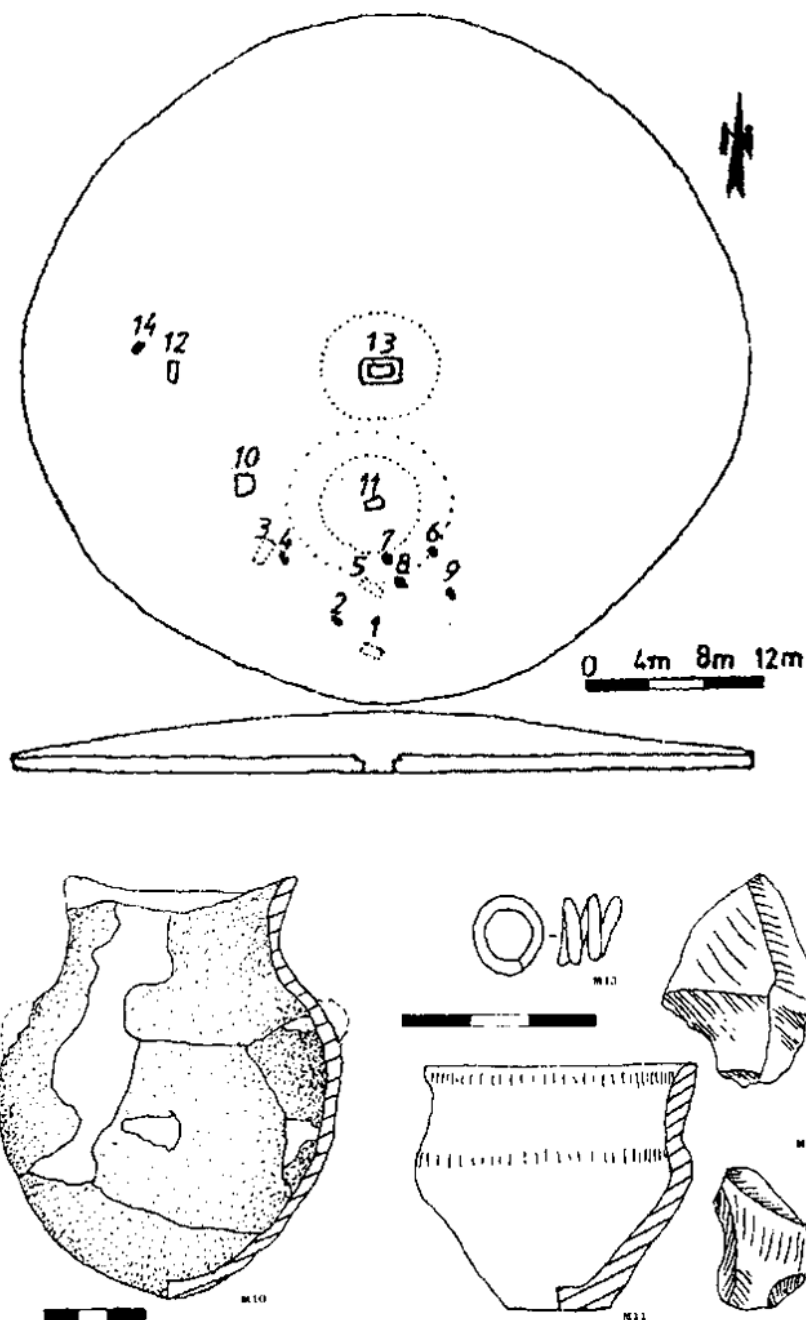


Figure 12. Vânători, Galați County. A. Tumulus no. 258 plan, B. Tumulus no. 258 inventory (Brudiu 1985b).

The relationships of the communities from Monteoru with the archaeological group lasted during the Ia phase, a Mnogovalikovaja vessel being discovered in a dwelling belonging to the respective level from Năeni–Zănoaga/Cetatea I. The Ia phase of Monteoru culture corresponds to the stage Reinecke Bz A1.

In the Akkiembetskiy kurgan (near Zatoka, on the shores of the Black Sea, on the benches of the river Dnieper) a succession of burials of the types Usatovo, Kemi-Oba, Yamnaya-Budjak and Mnogovalikovaja has been identified. From six graves and a ritual complex, all of Usatovo type, have been taken 11 assay-samples, which were placed around 2900-2200 BC after calibration, therefore a later dating<sup>47</sup>.

The catacomb graves are known in Smeieni<sup>48</sup> and Matca, the latter being associated with Ic3 pottery<sup>49</sup>. The oldest catacomb graves seem to be located between the Caspian Sea and the river Don, and the <sup>14</sup>C dating places them around 2700 BC<sup>50</sup>. Dates closer to our area are to be found in the catacomb graves from the tumuli near Ordžonikidze, in Ukraine. The twenty dates are placed in the interval 2500-1900 BC.

Customarily, Mnogovalikovaja culture has been placed in the interval between the seventeenth and fifteenth-fourteenth centuries BC<sup>51</sup>. A number of <sup>14</sup>C dates from the Mnogovalikovaja graves from Svatovo, Zatoka, Mironivka, and Ișeevo places these findings between 2500-1500 BC. Using <sup>14</sup>C dating, V. Trifonov has established an evolution from 2300 to 1800 BC for Mnogovalikovaja, which would correspond to the period Reinecke Bz A1 and A2 from Central Europe<sup>52</sup>.

E. Sava amended the absolute chronology, placing Mnogovalikovaja culture between 2100-1800 BC., and considering that it could last until 1700-1600 BC in the area between the rivers Pruth and Dnieper<sup>53</sup>. We can conclude that in the 2500-2200 BC interval, the ritual of placing the deceased in cists continues in parallel with the emergence in Căndești (middle Monteoru) of the catacomb graves, during the Ic3 and Ic2 phases. Some of these may be related to the Mnogovalikovaja phenomenon.

According to some funeral inventories from necropolis 4 from Sărata Monteoru, the second stage may be placed in the second part of this interval corresponding to Bz A1 și A2<sup>54</sup> as well, and the relations with Mnogovalikovaja culture seem to continue during the entire interval.

<sup>47</sup> Motzoi-Chicideanu 2008, 46.

<sup>48</sup> Simache, Teodorescu 1962, 273-282.

<sup>49</sup> Brudiu 1985a, 31-36.

<sup>50</sup> Motzoi-Chicideanu 2008, 47.

<sup>51</sup> Sava 1992, 170-175.

<sup>52</sup> Trifonov 2001, 71-82.

<sup>53</sup> Sava 2002, 220.

<sup>54</sup> Motzoi-Chicideanu 2008, 50.

The phases IIa și IIb and the relationships with Mnogovalikovaja culture (graves Căndești-buckles)<sup>55</sup> continue during the 1900-1700/1600 BC interval.

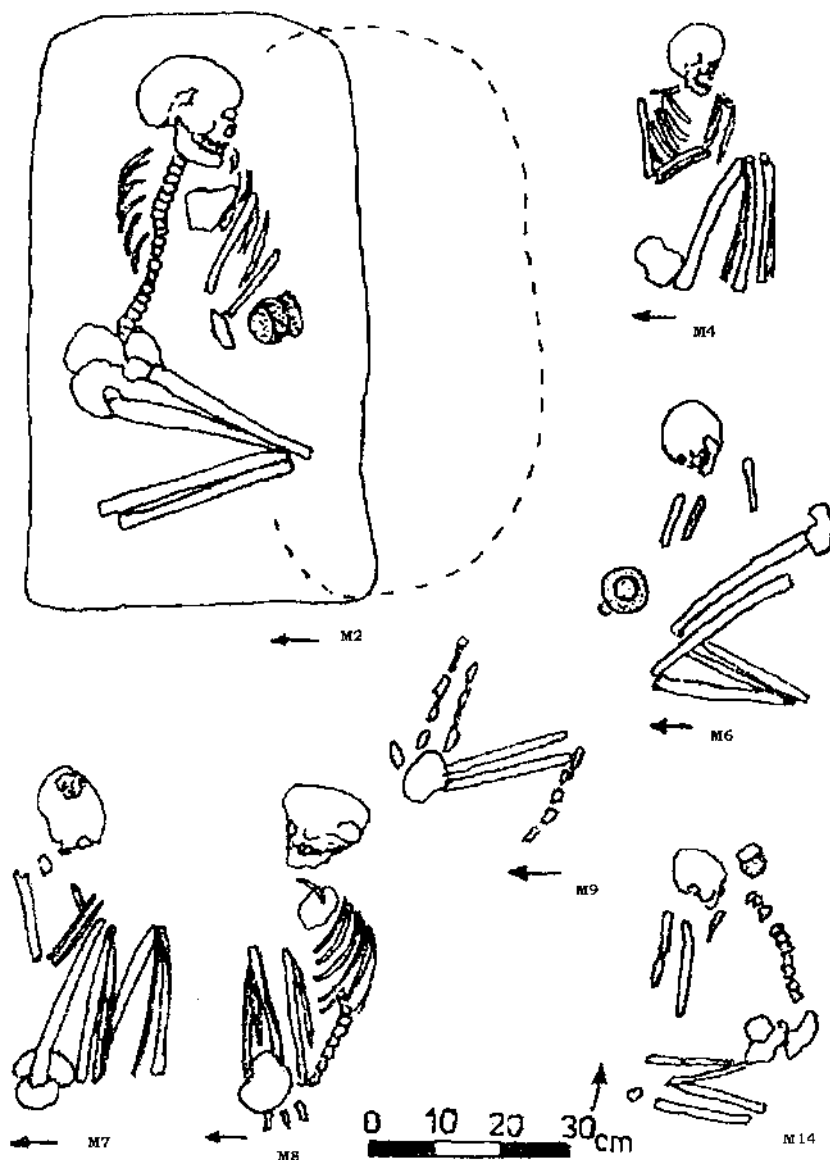


Figure 13. Vânători, Galați County. Tumulus no. 258 graves (Brudiu 1985b).

<sup>55</sup> Florescu, Florescu 1983, 117.

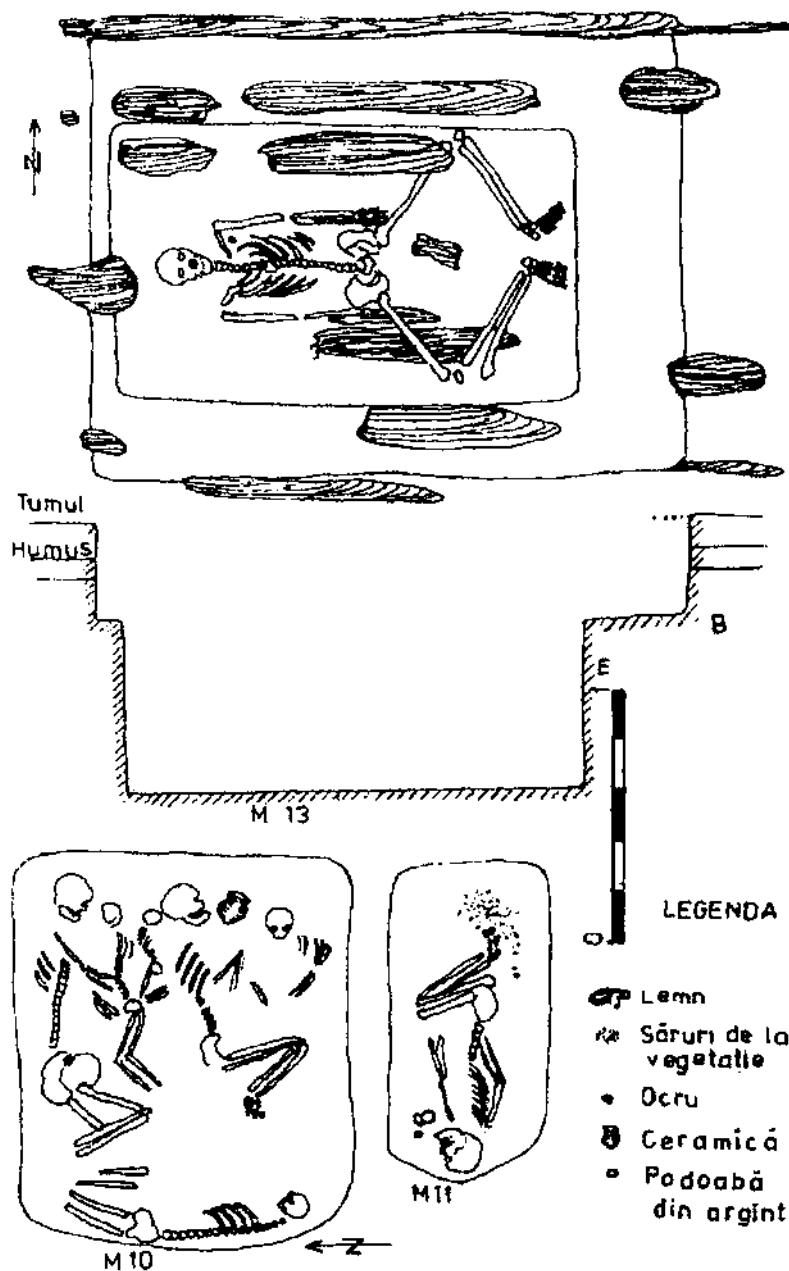


Figure 14. Vânători, Galați County. Tumulus no. 258, tomb plans (Brudiu 1985b).

Therefore, we can conclude that a period of convulsions, of population displacements, of phenomena which also involved communities north and west from of the Black Sea took place in the north-east side of the Romanian Plain and in the south of Moldavia.

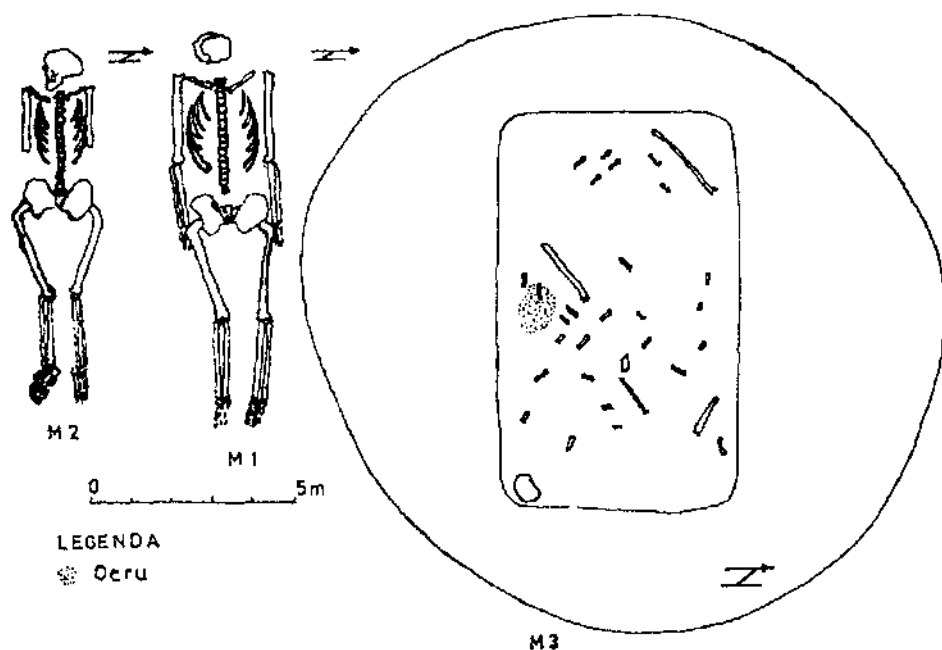


Figure 15. Grivița, Galați county. T314, tomb plan (Brudiu 1987, fig. 8).

### Findings Repertoire:

1. **Baldovinești**, Vădeni village, Brăila County [systematic excavation, N. Harțuche, Fl. Anastasiu 1961-1965]. A tumular necropolis has been found in *Pepiniera*, 5 kilometers westward from the limits of Chercea neighbourhood, in the city of Brăila, on the right side of the Brăila-Focșani main road, c. 600 metres south-west from the Water Tower.

An area of 222 meters has been surveyed, 17 interment graves from the Age of Bronze being discovered. The graves were placed at various depths, some being delved in yellow soil, others in the coating of the tumulus. Eleven graves presented inventory. The graves belong to two types: simple graves (15) and graves with wooden stakes in the corners and covered with girders (2). Fourteen skeletons were crouched, two lying on their back, with legs and arms outstretched, and one lying on his back with the arms outstretched and the legs bent from the knees.

Nine pieces of pottery have been discovered, not more than one for each grave. Most of the recipients are ragged, made of rough clay, unevenly fired. Other findings: two discoid bone buckles, one bone ring, an arrow pin and a silex blade, a curved stone knife (*Krummesser*). In M<sub>5</sub> (adult, crouched to the left, the head towards north-west, arms bent from the elbows and palms under the head), in the face area there were pieces of two cups specific to Tei culture, shaped in fine clay, with black polished slip; they have globular body, long neck, slightly flaring spout, and they are decorated with successive rows of cants placed in horizontal bands and ridgy rhombs. The graves M<sub>6</sub>, M<sub>10</sub>, M<sub>11</sub> can be attributed to Katakobnaja culture, and the others to Mnogovalikovaja<sup>56</sup>.

2. **Găvani**, Gemenele village, Brăila County [preventive excavation: S. Pandrea, V. Sîrbu, M. Vernescu and C. Croitoru 2011]. The site is located on the terrace bridge between two depression areas represented by the former pond Voineasca and the Valley of Ienca, c. 2.2 kilometres south from Găvani village, c. 2.5 kms south-east from the Mayor House of Gemenele and c. 9.5 kms north-west from Struna Mică Mound.

Tumulus T03. Raised in successive stages, the deposit levels in the coating being separated by leveling layers of hard loess (probably hard-packed); the deposits of T03 are situated in the - (55/60-120) cm interval. The tumulus has been partially destroyed during the Middle Ages, as proven by the existence of the black-grey sediment level placed between - (25-55/60) cm, in which animal bones and pieces of mediaeval pottery have been found; this is an archaeological layer which can be attributed to the Middle Ages. The recent ploughing destroyed the mediaeval deposits from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries.

Archaeological artifacts dating from prehistory and mediaeval age have been identified. M1, although lacking any inventory, is culturally framed in the group Foltești II, due to the position of the skeleton, the grave shape and the presence of ochre, and it can be chronologically dated around 3200-3000 BC.

Unpublished.

3. **Horia**, Surdila-Greci suburb, Brăila County [fortuitious find, 1971]. Tumulus at the end of Horia village, 2 km north-east from Făurei, near the river Buzău. Grave discovered at 2 meters depth. The skeleton was destroyed during the excavations. It seems that it was an adult, placed in crouched position, near the skull was a tronconic bowl with an overhead handle under the spout; it was

<sup>56</sup> Harțuche, Anastasiu 1968, 40-52; Harțuche, Anastasiu 1976, 170, fig. 352; Florescu 1991, 155; Sava 1992; Leahu 2003, 17.



shaped in fine clay, covered with fine slip, traces of polishing, colour: walnut-grey<sup>57</sup>.

4. **Roșiori**, Roșiori village, Brăila County [unauthorised digging made by the principal of the village school (1976)]. *Delved mound*, c. 2 km from the village, south-west from Lake Tătaru.

The tumulus had been excavated at the end of the nineteenth century by treasure hunters. The school principal surveyed the west side of the tumulus, finding in the two sections, at depths from 0.75 to 1.50 m, three interment graves, all of them secondary, (two from the Bronze Age, and a Sarmatic one). One of the graves contained four flint cuttings, brown-yellow and grey-brown coloured. A cup has been also discovered. It was shaped in fine black clay, with fine slip, ending in a small bottom in the shape of a button, slightly flattened; long neck, slightly flaring spout; decorated with successive cants placed obliquely alternating with triangles, the banded handle is broken. The cup belongs to Tei culture, phase III<sup>58</sup>.

5. **Brăilița, city of Brăila** [Systematic excavations: N. Harțuche 1955-1975, 1987]. The neighbourhood Brăilița, in the northern part of the city, is placed on the upper terrace on the left bench of the Danube, in the confluence area of the two horns, Măcin Canal (Dunărea Veche) and Cremenea horn (Dunărea Nouă). The archaeological site, which no longer exists today, was situated 500 m east from the church Sf. Dimitrie, at the end of Timiș Street, on the plough land between C. Petrescu Str. and Sf. Maria cemetery, up to north from Vadul Catagaței. A verdured meadow lays from Vadul Catagaței to the Danube.

The archaeological site from Brăilița comprises more settlements and necropoleis, from different ages and cultures: 1. Boian-Giulești settlement; 2. Gumelnița settlement; 3. Interment necropolis containing graves from Cernavodă I, Usatovo, Cernavodă II-Foltești, middle Bronze Age; 4. Coslogeni settlement; 5. Babadag settlement; 6. Getic settlement and necropolis; 7. Early mediaeval settlement. In 22 campaigns (1955-1975, 1987) around 2000 square metres have been excavated. In the necropolis, situated especially in the perimeter of the Gumelnița settlement (south -Groapa Cărmidăriei no. 2, on the eastern limit of the upper terrace of the Danube, to the west, Viilor Str., to the north beyond Vadul Catagaței); c. 1150 square metres have been delved.

310 graves have been discovered, (135 belong to Cernavodă I culture, 137 to Usatovo culture and 21 to Cernavodă II-Foltești culture). A number of 23 graves

<sup>57</sup> Harțuche 1973, 21.

<sup>58</sup> Harțuche 1980, 132-133; Leahu 2003, 24.

have been framed in the early and middle Bronze Age. The skeletons were lying on the back (250 individuals, six variants) and crouched (50 individuals). The position of ten skeletons could not be determined because of the bad preservation condition. The orientation is different from one another, more frequently in east-west and west-east directions, in 286 cases. The shape of the grave was in accordance with the position of the skeleton: for the crouched ones, the graves were especially oval, rarely oval-elongated, while the lying skeletons or the ones with the legs on a side were placed in rectangular graves, with rounded corners. The graves presented no traces of wooden or rock constructions.

Most of the graves contained only one skeleton; there were only 6 double graves. Out of 310 individuals interred in the necropolis, 216 were adults and 94 children, infant mortality being of 30.3%. 262 graves are 1.50 to 2.50 m deep. Ochre was placed in the graves, in the shape of granules, clods or powder. The ochre was deposited on the bones or on the surrounding soil (in the case of 37 skeletons of children and 64 skeletons of adults). Funeral inventory: pottery (48 bowls, in one piece or fragmented), rocks (flint and polished rock) – 178 pieces, bone, marble, alabaster and shells (*Spondylus*, *Dentalium*, *Cardium*). Apart from pottery, tools, weapons, clothing articles, jewelry were also discovered, as well as ritual deposits: ashes, coals, grain, chalk and argil clods, animal teeth, snail shells. The anthropologic study conducted on 20 graves (only 6.4% of total), has proven that, as opposed to the skeletons with ochre from Moldavia, of Proto-Europoid type, the ones found in Brăilița, as well as some found in Stoicani, display, besides the Proto-Europoid foundation, a mediterranean component, which may spring from the blending with the local populations<sup>59</sup>.

6. **City of Galați**, Galați County [systematic excavation: M. Brudiu, I. Limbidis 1976]. *Dunărea Neighbourhood*; high terrace at the confluence of the river Siret with the Danube.

A tumulus from the Bronze Age (H = 1.70 m; D = 30 m). The mode of founding of the necropolis and the succession of the graves are difficult to establish. The central grave (Yamnaya) for whom the tumulus was raised has a trapezoidal grave and it seems that it was a cenotaph. The raising of the tumulus is also contemporaneous with the surrounding ditch (l- 0.8-1 m, depth = 0.6 m). Other graves:

<sup>59</sup> Harțuche, Anastasiu 1968, 7-8, 18-23; Harțuche 1980a, 310-312; Harțuche 2002; Necrasov, Cristescu 1957, 75-88; Florescu 1991, 156; Vernescu 2008, 50-51.

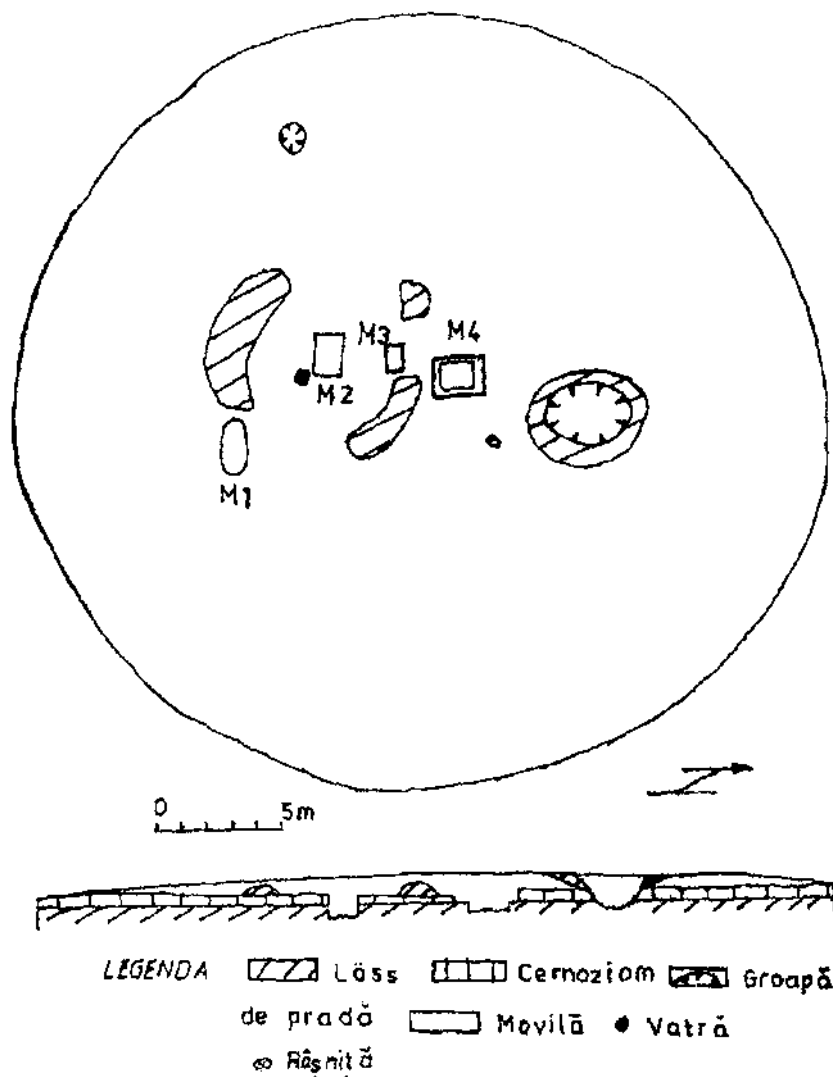


Figure 16. Grivița, Galați County. T315, tomb plan (Brudiu 1987, fig. 3).

- M<sub>2</sub>, in the south part of the tumulus, oval grave, crouched skeleton, south-north oriented. Near the face there were two bowls (one with spheroidal body and two handles with vertical orifices – one was broken and the other, a tronconic cup).
- M<sub>4</sub>, in south-west part of the tumulus, the skeletons was re-interred and had a tronconic cup as inventory.

- M<sub>5</sub>, in the south-south east part of the tumulus, the skeleton lying on his back and the legs crouched and bent to the left; no inventory.

If M<sub>2</sub> (Yamnaya culture, the classical phase) had a small tumulus (as assumed), then it is older than the grave considered central, whose coating covered the eventual tumulus raised on the M<sub>2</sub>. M<sub>4</sub> and M<sub>5</sub> can be characteristic to Yamnaya culture, while from the group of overlapped graves M<sub>6-8</sub>, one can be dated in the same period. Other graves belong to Mnogovalikovaja culture and others are even later. For this tumulus there is a <sup>14</sup>C dating, on a coal assay, but we do not know the site from where the sample was collected (Bln-2510: 3400±150 BP, with 1s: 1900-1520 CalBC; with 2s: 2133-1410 CalBC). It is probably M<sub>8</sub>, the only grave in which coal was found. The dating is in the middle, possibly Late Bronze Age<sup>60</sup>.

7. **Grivița**, Grivița village, Galați County [systematic excavation: M. Brudiu 1986]. In the Gerului Valley, at the eastern limit of Tecuci Plain, on the areal of the village.

Two tumuli have been surveyed (T314 and T315), placed 150 m from one another. Tumulus 314, raised in one phase, had a fireplace on the western side. The central grave consisted of a construction with a round entrance room and funeral room of rectangular form, with rounded corners. The skeleton was dishevelled, but the archaeologist considers that he was crouched on his back, with the knees up and the head to the east. He had red ochre on his bones and in the bottom of the grave, on the southern side. No inventory.

Tumulus 315 was also raised in one phase. The central grave had a rectangular grave with square corners, the skeleton was crouched on his back, with his legs in rhomb, east-west oriented. He had ochre on his head, arms, on torso and legs. Inventory: one cup with three pins, lanyard decoration, and left from the skull, a miniature bowl with ochre. Both graves belong to the classical phase of the Yamnaya culture<sup>61</sup>.

8. **Liești**, Liești village, Galați County [systematic excavation: M. Brudiu 1985]. *Movila Arbănașu*, situated on a small interfluvium between a ravine and Gerului Valley.

The tumulus was raised in more stages. 29 graves from various ages have been discovered (transition period, the Bronze Age, Sarmatic, Turanic, the modern age). The oldest grave (M<sub>22</sub>) belongs, by virtue of ritual and inventory, to the transition period (Životilovka-Volčansk-Bursuceni aspect). The next oldest are ten Yamnaya graves. In M<sub>2</sub> there was a vessel decorated with a row of circular impressions,

<sup>60</sup> Brudiu 1985b, 241-247; Brudiu 1987, 10-15; Burtănescu 2002, 114-115; Ilie, Nicu 2002, 19; Brudiu 2003, 59-62.

<sup>61</sup> Brudiu 1987, 11-15, fig. 3-5; 6/1-2; 7-8; Brudiu 2003, 64-65; Burtănescu 2002, 120.

attributed to the classical period of Yamnaya culture. In another grave, attributed to the late period of Yamnaya culture, the inventory consisted of a small amphora, a sandstone object and a bone pin. There are also nine interments from the Bronze Age, with skeletons moderately crouched, reclining to the left or to the right<sup>62</sup>.

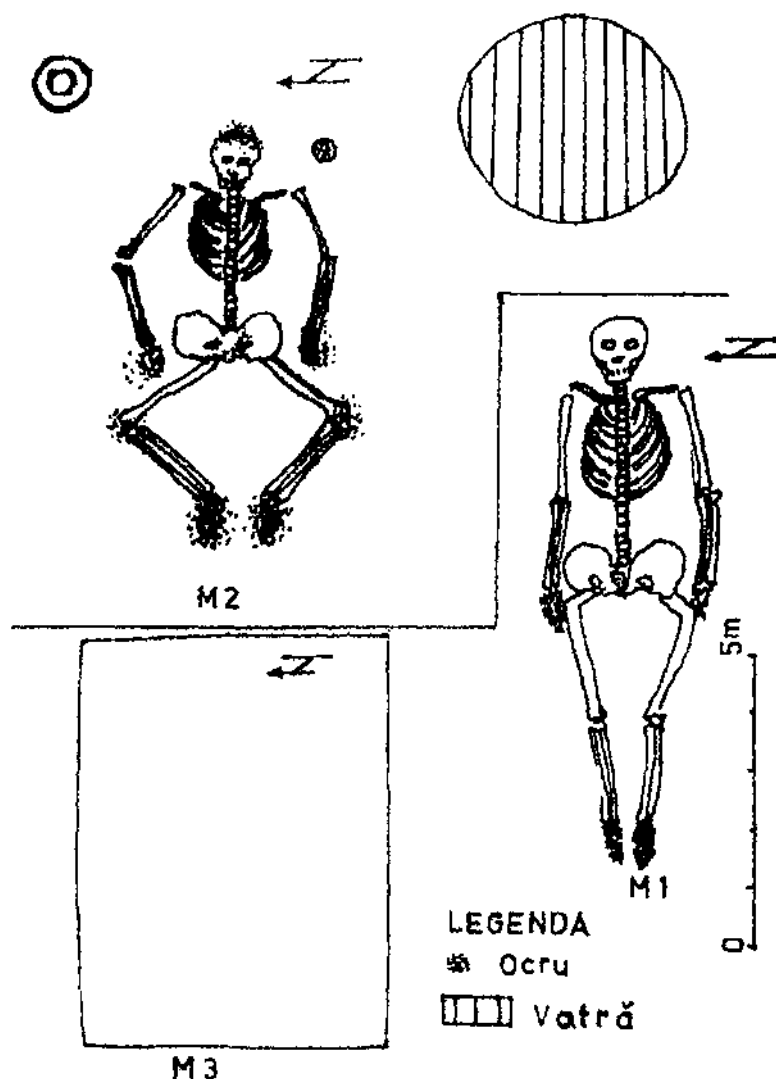


Figure 17. Gravița, Galați County. T 315 tombs (Brudiu 1987).

<sup>62</sup> Brudiu 1991, 47; 2003, 48-52; Burtănescu 2002, 127.

9. **Matca**, Matca village, Galați County [survey M. Brudiu]. Unspecified toponym. Westward from Bujoru Woods, on the occasion of fixing the topometric mark on a tumulus, ( $T_{53}$ ,  $H = 1$  m.,  $D = 20$  m), three graves have been discovered and surveyed. The first has been identified in the northern part of the tumulus,  $d = 0.6$  m. The grave, north-east-south-west oriented, was enhanced with a threshold placed in length, clad in wooden girders. The deceased was placed in dorsal decubitus, with the head oriented towards north-east, and arms outstretched near the body. Partially dishevelled by the digging of the second grave. From the funeral inventory, a cup shaped in fine black clay, beautifully decorated and another one, almost spheroidal, shaped in grey spongy clay, as well as a few pottery pieces, probably from a third recipient have been recovered. All belong to the first Iron Age (Hallstatt, Basarabi culture) [survey M. Brudiu, 1980]<sup>63</sup>.  
 A.2. The second interment grave, of the catacomb type, was oriented towards east-west, with the arch of the side niche enhanced with five oak wooden girders. The deceased was placed in dorsal decubitus. The funeral inventory consisted of one fragmented recipient, placed in the torso area. The vessel is of *spendegefäß* type, specific to the Bronze Age (Monteoru culture)<sup>64</sup>.  
 A.3. The third grave identified at the depth 0.80 m, was rectangular. In the left side of the deceased, on a threshold, in the median area, was placed a horse skull with bit and other iron harness pieces, poorly preserved. From the funeral inventory, few elements from the saddle have been recovered, placed near the feet of the deceased, two arrow pins, one knife, two buckles. It is considered that the grave was that of a Turanic (Pecheneg?)<sup>65</sup>.
10. **Măcișeni**, Corni village, Galați County [systematic excavation: M. Brudiu 1983]. *Movila Săpată* or *Movila lui Gh. Mohorea*; on the road to Branișteana, at the crossroads of the villages Corni and Băleni with *Athanaric's Vallum*. The basin of the river Suhurlui (tributary of the river Siret).  
 Flattened tumulus ( $H = 0.5$  m). In the central part of the tumulus, at depth = 0.60 m and at its base, pottery pieces from a large bowl decorated with bands in relief have been recovered. No funeral complexes. Possibly belonging to the early Bronze Age<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Brudiu 1985a, 32-35, fig. 3-4; 2003, 72-73, fig. 35; 36/1-2.

<sup>64</sup> Brudiu 2003, 77-78, fig. 35; 36/1. The placement of the vessel is unclear, in the paper cited, it is placed "on the ancient trampling area, above the niche grave, approximately in the torsus area"; Brudiu 1998, 66: "the skeleton in dorsal decubitus and above, at the base of the tumulus, we found a vessel...."; Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 122, nr. 568 (Monteoru culture, phase Ic3).

<sup>65</sup> Brudiu 1998, 66-72, fig. 1-3; 2003, 74-76, fig. 37-38; Spinei 1994, 172; Hânceanu 2011, 174-175, no. 144a.

<sup>66</sup> Brudiu 1987, 11; 1991, 55; Brudiu 2003, 62-63, 120 and fig. 24; Burtănescu 2002, 127-128.

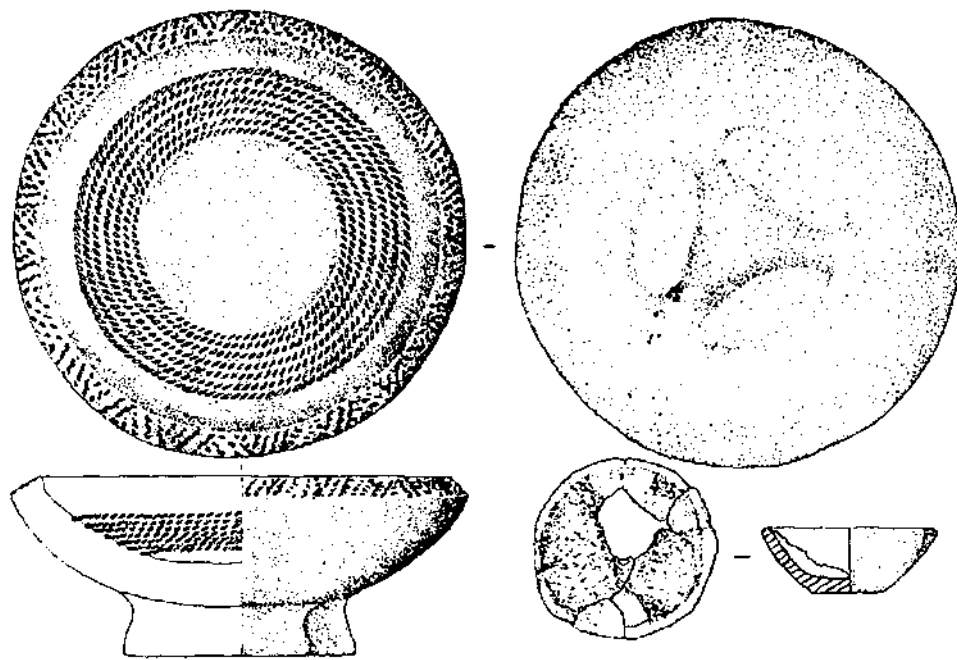


Figure 18. Grivița, Galați County. T 315 inventory (Brudiu 1987, fig. 5-6).

11. **Stoicani**, Foltești village, Galați County [surface survey (1939) and systematic excavation (1946-1949): M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița].

*Cetățuia*; eastern boundary of the village, c. 100 m east from the train station, at the end of the river Pruth meadow; in the south extremity there were dwellings, and in the north-west, the cemetery.

On the prehistoric multilayered settlement, have been discovered 15 graves with crouched skeletons (13 individual, one – double and another one, triple). Some had the bones covered in red ochre or were placed on a thin layer of yellow ochre. The graves were probably in a flattened tumulus and are more recent than the Foltești settlement from this area. The skeletons were placed in simple graves. In six individual graves, the skeletons were crouched to the left, in other five, were crouched to the right. In the double grave, one skeleton was crouched to the left and the other, to the right. In the triple grave, all the skeletons were crouched to the right. The graves had various depths. The deepest had skeletons crouched to the right (5) and to the left (3); crouching was moderate for children and pronounced for adults. The arms position varied – entwined near the face, between

knees and chest, outstretched along the body, etc. Only in the graves from this group has been found red ochre on the bones. The double and triple graves are in the same group. Only one vessel has been found in M<sub>12</sub> and a bone buckle in M<sub>7a</sub>.

In the group of the graves found at lower depths there were four graves, three of them contained skeletons crouched to the left, and one, to the right. Crouching was moderate in the case of children. The arms were brought to the knees, near the face, etc. A vessel with a handle has been found in M<sub>2</sub> and a bone buckle in M<sub>3</sub>. This group does not present ochre on the bones..

In M<sub>5</sub> the skeleton was lying on his back, with the legs crouched to the left and the arms towards the torso. On the chest was a piece fragment of a rock axe. The ochre graves from *Cetățuie* are more recent than the Usatovo settlement, as the graves dishevelled this settlement. The graves 9-10 and 14-15 can be framed in Yamnaya culture (late phase), 5 and 13 in Katakobnaja culture, and 3 and 7 in Mnogovalikovaja culture<sup>67</sup>.

12. **Șendreni**, Șendreni village, Galați County [fortuitous find: I. Limbidis 1974]. On the left bench of the river Siret, in a tumulus next to the main road Galați-Brăila.

Grave; skeleton completely destroyed by the blade of a bulldozer; impossible to establish its position and orientation. The bones recovered were partially covered in red ochre. Inventory: vessel of fine clay, brickly-yellow in exterior and walnut-grey inside, polished, long, cylindrical neck, broad spout, no decorations; four fragments of tubular bronze-leaf beads; four *Dentalium* shell beads; grey flint cutting. The bronze and *Dentalium* beads and the silex piece are similar to those found in Brăilița. The grave is attributed to the late stage of Yamnaya<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1950, 118-119; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1953b, 157-211; Haimovici 1974, 99-102; Zirra 1960, 97-127; László 1975, 21, no. 14, fig. 2/8; 2/20-21; Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Dinu 1974, 71-97; Dragomir 1970, 25-93; Florescu 1991, 159; Ilie, Nicu 2002, 31; Dinu 1999; Burtănescu 2002, 133-134; Teodorescu 2011, 99-100, nr. 34; for the association of the findings with the Mnogovalikovaja culture, see Sava 1992, 188-189; Motzoi-Chicideanu 2011, 150, nr. 880-881; See also Necrasov, Floru, Nicolăescu-Plopșor 1959, 9-32.

<sup>68</sup> Dragomir 1976, 55-57; Burtănescu 2002, 134.



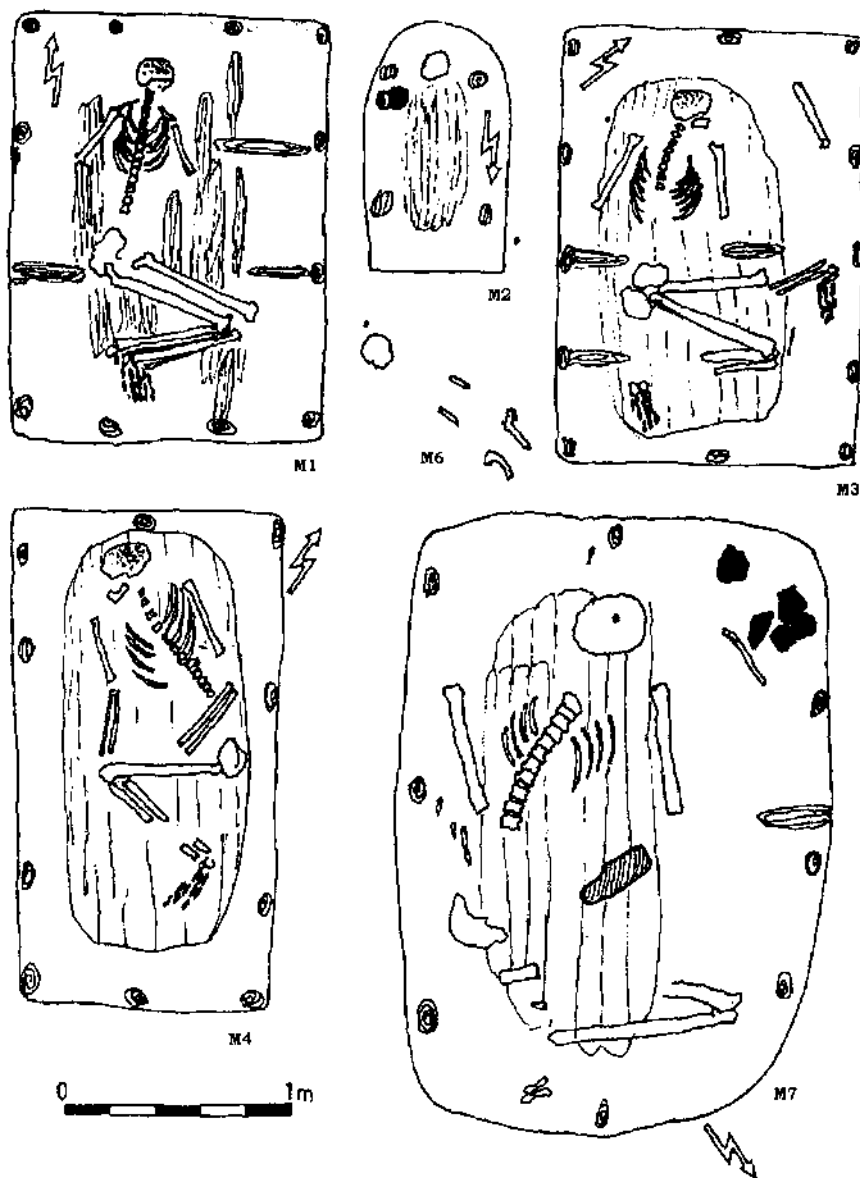


Figure 19. Liești, Galați County. Tumulus no. 78 tombs (Brudiu 1985b).

13. **Șerbeștii Vechi**, Șendreni village, Galați County [systematic excavation: M. Brudiu 1987-1988]. The kurgan is at the edge of a terrace left from the river Siret, towards Valea Greaca, 200 m south from Traian village and the ancient vallum Traian-Tulucești.

Tumulus (D = 25 m; H = 0.9 m); five graves have been discovered.

M1: rhomboidal grave, east-west oriented, dishevelled skeleton, pottery pieces, red ochre;

M2: trapezoidal grave, skeleton lateral decubitus to the left, legs crouched to the left, left arm bent from the elbow, right arm towards the abdomen, ochre on the skull and arms, two cuttings;

M3: main grave, rectangular with rounded corners, covered with girders, east-west oriented, skeleton with large cranium (dolichocephalic), lateral decubitus to the right, right hand outstretched, left hand on the abdomen, placed on a wooden bed, ochre near the face, no inventory; in the south part of the grave there were traces of a fireplace (a ritual fire might have been set);

M4: trapezoidal grave, with a footstep (the small grave placed asymmetrically from the WNW-ESE axis), skeleton placed in lateral decubitus to the left, crouched legs, left arm outstretched, right arms oriented towards the abdomen; ochre on the skull and the legs and arms bones; inventory: tronconic bowl (placed in front of the skull);

M5: rectangular grave, E-W oriented; skeleton crouched to the left, left hand under pelvis, right arm bent from the elbow and outstretched near the body. Ochre present, no inventory. Nearby, there were pieces of a broken vessel made of raw clay, bitronconic shape, slight flaring edges.

The graves belong to the late phase of Yamnaya<sup>69</sup>.

14. **Tulucești**, Tulucești village, Galați County [fortuitous find].

Behind the train station.

Two interment graves with skeletons covered in ochre, in crouched positions. No inventory. They can be associated with Yamnaya culture.

Unpublished material. Many thanks to Mr. Amelian Chirilă for the information provided.

15. **Vânători**, Vânători village, Galați County [salvation excavations, M. Brudiu 1981].

*Movila de la Nicolae Țocu*; 1 km north from the village, in Covurlui Plain. Basin of the river Pruth.

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<sup>69</sup> Burtănescu 2002, 134-135; Brudiu 2003, 71-72, 125 and fig. 33-34.

Tumulus (H = 3 m; D = 60 m), raised in two stages. 14 graves have been discovered (all in the southern part of the tumulus). One of them (M<sub>10</sub>) contained six skeletons (two adults and four children, all crouched). It seems that the collective grave was delved before raising of the first tumulus or at the same time with the interment considered as the main one (M<sub>11</sub>), in the transition period to the Bronze Age. The first tumulus was raised above M<sub>11</sub> (H = 1 m; D = 13 m). M<sub>13</sub> belongs to the same period (late Foltești – Yamnaya) (delved in steps and covered with girders, a silver piece of jewelry has been discovered here). Seven graves belong to the end of the middle Bronze Age (M<sub>2</sub>, catacomb; M<sub>4</sub>, M<sub>6</sub>-M<sub>9</sub>, M<sub>14</sub>, Srubnaja culture) and four to the migration period (M<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>3</sub>, M<sub>5</sub>, M<sub>12</sub>). F. Burtănescu believes that M<sub>11</sub> should be attributed to the graves of the Vânători-Bolotești type by virtue of its inventory. M<sub>10</sub> can be attributed to the graves of the Životilovka-Volčansk-Bursuceni type or to Yamnaya culture. M<sub>13</sub> and M<sub>14</sub> could be framed within Yamnaya culture, the classical and late periods, and perhaps within Mnogovalikovaja or late Bronze, as the most part of the graves<sup>70</sup>.

16. **Vlădești**, Vlădești village, Galați County [săpături de salvare, M. Brudiu 1989].

Group of four tumuli; *Old Tumulus* (T<sub>216</sub>), T<sub>343</sub>, T<sub>344</sub> and T<sub>419</sub>, placed on the watershed of the Părului Hill, 3 km westward from the village, in the basin of the river Pruth.

In the *Old Tumulus* (D = 60 m; H = 2 m) two graves have been discovered:

M<sub>1</sub>, E-W oriented, the skeleton was crouched to the right, with the knees up to chest, the right hand on the abdomen and the left hand on the chest. No inventory. Attributed to the late period of the Bronze Age;

M<sub>2</sub>, NW-SE oriented, rectangular grave (1.90 × 1.60 m), surrounding threshold which supported the girders; the skeleton was lying on his back (on a vegetal bed and covered in a lot of ochre), with the arms stretched along the body and the legs crouched and bent to the left. Inventory: tronconic vessel of fine clay (polished) and a pendant made from a carnivore (bear?) molar. Attributed to Yamnaya culture.

Tumulus T<sub>343</sub> (D = 20 m; H = 1 m) was situated 40 meters south from T<sub>216</sub> and contained two graves:

M<sub>1</sub>, main grave (principal (NW-SE oriented), dishevelled, crushed bones with ochre traces. Pieces from a grey vessel (decorated with a serpentine band), and of a wooden bedding have been found in this grave;

M<sub>2</sub> (oriented W-E), dishevelled skeleton covered in ochre, placed on a wooden bedding. Inventory: golden spiral ring.

Both graves have been attributed to Yamnaya culture.

<sup>70</sup> Brudiu 1985b, 235-242; Brudiu 1991, 53; Brudiu 2003, 54-59, 115 and fig. 16-19; Burtănescu 2002, 139-140.

Tumulus T<sub>344</sub> (40 m south from T<sub>343</sub>) was completely flattened (D = 16 m). The main grave had a square form, 1m each size, but it was destroyed by predators and the position of the skeleton could not be established. Inventory: a grey vessel of fine clay, polished surface, oblique edge, tronconic neck, oval body, overhead handle. Attributed to the late period of the Bronze Age, with analogies with Radovanu, suggesting an advanced stage of the ethno-cultural fusion between the elements north from the Black Sea and the Balkanic ones<sup>71</sup>.

Tumulus T<sub>419</sub>, 30 meters south from T<sub>334</sub> (H = 0,55 m). The grave (1.90 × 1 m) was deepened 1.05 m from the tumulus base, E-W oriented . It was dihevelled, the bones (with ochre) were crushed, and it contained a flint piece. Attributed to Yamnaya culture<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> Morintz 1978, 145, 159; Brudiu 2003, 70.

<sup>72</sup> Brudiu 1991, 53; Brudiu 2003, 67-70, 114, 126, 134 and fig. 30-32; Burtănescu 2002, 140.

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