

Hoard, Feasts and Travels. Possible Social and Economic Responses to Environment and Landscape During Middle Bronze Age in NW Romania and NE Hungary

Alexandra Țârlea*, Mihai Florea**

Abstract: The aim of the present article is to determine if and how the environment and landscape specificity of the area taken into discussion affected the social settings of the Middle Bronze Age communities. The focus is on the characteristics of the depositional process and what makes it different from what happens in the neighbouring areas, but equally important is considered the attempt of placing this phenomenon in an equation implicating two other factors: pottery as another domain of the material culture and travels as the means of spreading the new ideas, knowledge, technology, materials and finished products. Hoards, feasts and travels are then set in the social background they reflect through the archaeological record, in the hope of offering a viable model of a MBA society.

Rezumat: Scopul acestui articol este de a determina dacă și în ce mod mediul și condițiile de teren din zona luată în discuție au influențat cadrul social al comunităților Bronzului Mijlociu. Articolul se concentrează pe caracteristicile procesului de depunere a obiectelor din metal și ceea ce îl face diferit de ceea ce se întâmplă în zonele învecinate, dar la fel de importantă este considerată încercarea de a plasa acest fenomen într-o ecuație ce implică alți doi factori: ceramica, ce reprezintă un alt domeniu al culturii materiale, și călătoriile, ca mijloc de răspândire a noilor idei, cunoștințelor, tehnologiei, materiilor prime și produselor finite. Depozitele, ospetele și călătoriile sunt apoi plasate pe fundalul social pe care îl reflectă prin descoperirile arheologice, în speranța de a oferi un model viabil al unei societăți din Bronzul Mijlociu.

Key words: Middle Bronze Age (MBA), Otomani culture, Suceasa culture, hoard, feast, travel, environment

Cuvinte cheie: Bronz Mijlociu, cultura Otomani, cultura Suceasa de Sus, depozit de bronzuri, ospăț, călătorie, mediu

* Departamentul de Istorie Veche și Arheologie, Facultatea de Istorie, Universitatea București, Bd. Regina Elisabeta 4-12, sector 5, 030018, București; e-mail: alex_tarlea@yahoo.com

** Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, Calea Victoriei, 12, 030026, București; e-mail: mihaiifs@yahoo.com

The present article has its “roots” in several observations, made by one of the authors while struggling with her PhD thesis¹, concerning some characteristics of the MBA depositional process in the north-western part of Romania and eastern part of Hungary. Its aim is to sketch a theoretical model which hopefully would fit on at least some part of the social framework that surrounded, sustained and encouraged the deposition of metal objects and hoards in this area. The article has no better claim than this, as the authors are perfectly aware that the expected lifespan and/or availability of such theoretical models last until the next archaeological find or hypothesis turns the accepted theories upside down.

Hoards

The deposition of metal objects can safely be described as one of the most defining Bronze Age characteristics for large parts of Europe, and the territory between rivers Danube, Tisza and Prut makes no exception. Here, as anywhere else on the continent, the depositional practice – continuous as a general phenomenon – visibly varies in time and space. This means that specific areas experience ups and downs in the process and see the flourishing of hoarding during specific periods of time, followed by its decrease or even total disappearance. In the same time neighbouring areas can relate in totally different manners to the depositional practice, with hoards and/or single finds literally crowding in one area, and almost or completely absent from the one next to it. This situation can be explained in different ways, from economic to ritual or social reasons. There is no need that emphasis should be put on only one category of explanations, as there is no reason to consider that the same stimuli would have been at work no matter of time, place and cultural milieu. As it probably happens with any widely spread phenomenon, the possibility that a certain set of general traits gained in time local characteristics cannot be ruled out. Even more, exactly the general character of a phenomenon such as the deposition of metal objects makes it appropriate for adaptation to the local or regional world’s view of people and personal or group interests. As a result, there is nothing surprising in the wide variety of the depositional practice; the contrary (in terms of a too strong similarity no matter of area or period) would rather require more explanations.

Consequently, there is nothing unusual in the fact that the territory between rivers Danube, Tisza and Prut develops specific trends in deposition during EBA, some of them continuing during MBA, while others visibly change. Not necessarily unusual but surely interesting is the way in which the change is adopted in different areas

¹ Țârlea 2012.

inside these territorial limits. It is in this context that the situation of the north-western part of Romania and eastern part of Hungary will be analysed.

The deposition of metal objects was divided for the purposes of the present discussion into five categories: *single finds* (copper/bronze objects); *uni-type hoards* (associations of objects of the same major type – e.g. shaft-hole axes); *multi-type hoards* (associations of objects of different major types – e.g. shaft-hole axes and flat axes)²; *single finds* (gold objects); *treasures* (associations of gold or gold/silver objects).

A number of 87 finds can be attributed, with various degrees of certainty, to the first part of Bronze Age: 79 single finds, 3 uni-type hoards and 5 multi-type hoards (Fig. 1; Map 1)³. To these were added on the map another 12 finds (11 single finds and 1 uni-type hoard) which were attributed more loosely in the archaeological literature to the EBA–MBA period (Map 1).

The graph (Fig. 1) shows the EBA clearly dominated by the category of single finds, representing 90.8% from the total number of finds, with the categories of uni-type and multi-type hoards sharing the rest (3.33% and 5.87%). It is very true that such numbers and percentages must be taken into consideration more in an informative than in an absolute manner (because of the limits in research and publication on one hand, and chronological uncertainties on another hand)⁴, but still the difference between the categories is such as to be clear enough that it reflects (even with some distortions) the reality of that period.

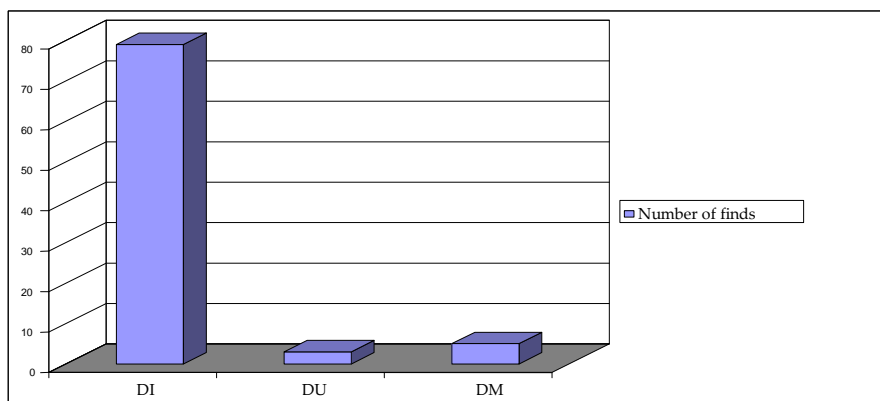


Fig. 1. The EBA depositions (DI = single find; DU = uni-type hoard; DM = multi-type hoard).

² The idea to separate the associations of objects in uni-type and multi-type hoards was inspired by Vandkilde 1996.

³ The data used for the present discussion are taken from Țârlea 2012.

⁴ Same prudence is recommended for the situation of the MBA finds presented below.

For MBA 242 finds were taken into consideration, from which 175 are single finds (170 copper and bronze objects; 5 gold objects), 21 uni-type hoards, 30 multi-type hoards, and 16 treasures (Fig. 2; Map 2). The graph shows the category of single finds still leading, but in a slightly more balanced manner (approx. 70.25% from the total number of finds or 77% if the gold single finds and treasures are excluded). The uni-type hoards represent approx. 8.7% (or 9.5%), and the multi-type hoards 12.4% (or approx. 13.5%).

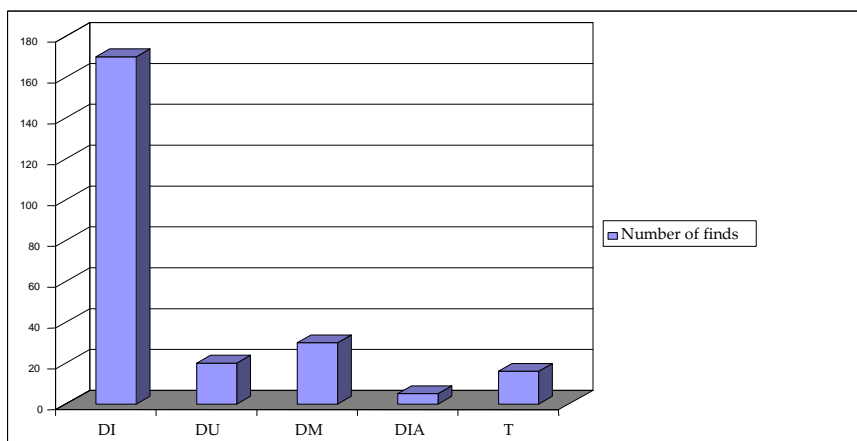


Fig. 2. The MBA depositions (DI = single find; DU = uni-type hoard; DM = multi-type hoard; DIA = single find gold; T = treasure).

A comparison between the two graphs (Figs. 1 and 2) shows that during MBA the depositional practice preserves several EBA characteristics, such as the discrepancy between the number of single finds and that of other categories. Moreover, the number of single finds has doubled during this period. In the same time new elements are present which prefigure the ulterior LBA trends of the phenomenon, like the fact that the growth rate of the number of hoards is already much higher than that of single finds. This indicates an increasing focus on this form of deposition (and especially on the category of multi-type hoards, with the fastest growth), in the same time maintaining or adopting the practice of depositing single metal objects.

An interesting aspect of this new situation which does not result directly by consulting the graphs is instead singled out clearly by the distribution maps.

EBA is a period characterised by the spreading of the depositions over a large territory with few more defined clusters (e.g. Mureș/Maros valley), but also with some white areas (Map 1). The map helps to underline the preponderance of the category of single finds and the erratic distribution of the small number of hoards.

MBA shows some similarities with the previous period but also some interesting developments (Map 2). The most traditional aspect regards the treatment of the single finds, especially in that some of the areas interested in this type of deposition during EBA continue the trend (e.g. the Mureş valley; the areas east and south of the Carpathians; south-eastern Transylvania), only more “in force”, to say so. Other areas seem to be properly filled with metal depositions only during MBA, as is the case with central Transylvania and the north-western and western part of the analysed territory. As a matter of fact, the resulted image is that of a “layer” of single finds on which hoards are “sprinkled”. These hoards, although not so numerous in comparison with the number of single finds, change the overall image of the depositional process for this period, due to the specificity of their distribution, which seems being erratic. It is sufficiently clear that the majority of hoards come from the area between the Carpathians and Tisza River, but what is really of interest for the present discussion is the way they are distributed in the interior of these limits, since they seem to outline two depositional zones separated (or rather connected?) by the course of the Mureş River.

One of these zones is Transylvania, characterised by a consistent number of single finds in its central area. It is “closed” at south-east (the Transylvanian entrance in the mountain passes towards east and south) and west (the Mureş valley) by two clusters consisting of a majority of single finds mingled with a small number of hoards. Maybe it should be interesting to notice that these are represented almost in totality by uni-type hoards in south-eastern Transylvania, like a reflection of what happens on the other side of the mountains (or the other way around), and by multi-type hoards on the Mureş valley.

The other zone, which represents the focus of this discussion, stretches from the Someş valley at north to the Mureş valley at south. Its eastern limit could be at choice the Western Carpathians (in which case the depositions double their western and northern slopes) or the Mureş valley (with the depositions practically surrounding the mountains). From the depositional point of view, this zone is characterised by a combination of single finds and hoards, with a clear emphasis on the deposition of multi-type hoards.

The difference in this respect between the two zones is quite striking: while the multi-type hoards are represented in Transylvania in a relation of approx. 1:11 with the single finds (if the Mureş valley is included – otherwise the imbalance is higher, around 1:30), in the western zone this relation becomes approx. 1:1.3. Such a situation cannot be simply the result of hazard; it is far more probable the resulting image of two different ways of dealing with metal objects when it comes to their deposition. In both zones the deposition of single metal objects is important, but while in Transylvania this represents the **main** form of deposition (as it happens also in the rest

of the territory, only on a smaller scale), in the western part it is almost overwhelmed by the deposition of **multi-type hoards**. It is less clear to which zone should be attributed the Mureș valley, strictly from the point of view of the types of deposits; at a first look, it could be interpreted as a transition area or a permissive border separating and in the same time connecting the two zones, and as such borrowing depositional characteristics from both.

Thus, the western part of the territory between Danube, Tisza and Prut presents certain particularities in the depositional practice which differentiate it from what happens east and south of the Mureș valley and from this point of view can be safely described as the most **innovative** or **effervescent** zone during MBA. But is this going further than the preference shown for a certain type of deposition, in this case the multi-type hoard? Is the specific way in which people relate to the metal objects limited just to the depositional practice, or is this only one trait from a whole set? In order to find an answer to this question, it is necessary to take a quick look at the metal objects deposited in this zone.

Two observations made for the first part of the European Bronze Age could be useful for the present discussion. Firstly, the technological developments in metallurgy advanced to such a degree that highly sophisticated items could be fashioned from metal, making it a worthwhile investment. In the same time, the excavations of Bronze Age settlements offered some surprises since they prove that stone and wood tools were widely used, continuing a long-standing prehistoric tradition, while metal began to feature only very slowly in the domestic domain. This indicates that a division existed between the prestige sphere and the domestic sphere. This distinction is not new and had always been present in one form or another, but it is unique in terms of the increasing gap that emerged between the various productions techniques. As a result, metal objects, which included weapons, ceremonial objects and even jewellery and required full-time specialists, became the most highly “valued”. The situation was translated in terms of an emerging “two-speed” society in which those with weapons were accorded greater social standing⁵. This also means that special treatment of such objects can be expected, inclusively a specific way of ending their social life, for example as depositions. Secondly, at least in some cases this metalwork sphere is split in its turn, indicating an internal form of hierarchy, like it happens for example in Southern Scandinavia during Period IB⁶.

If we are to consider the categories of metal objects used for deposition during EBA and MBA in the territory between Danube, Tisza and Prut, the conclusion most at hand would be that people of those times were simply wild about axes. This category

⁵ Guilaine, Zammit 2005, 198.

⁶ Vandkilde 1996, 289-295.

undoubtedly forms the bulk of the objects deposited during EBA, and this characteristic survives during the next period. The main difference is the clear pre-eminence gained by shaft-hole axes to the detriment of flat axes during MBA. While the presence of the shaft-hole axes can be described in terms of continuity, the deposition of metal objects takes now a step further in terms of variety. On one hand, the majority of finds is still represented by the shaft-hole axes, but they assume new types and forms compared to EBA; on another hand, new categories of objects make their appearance (in use as well as in deposition), probably the best known and most discussed being the swords.

From this perspective, the analysed zone respects the main trend since it puts a strong emphasis on the deposition of shaft-hole axes. In the same time it shows openness to the deposition of entirely new categories of objects like swords and massive armguards, and to other categories like daggers and, in a much smaller number, different ornaments (Map 3).

The Bronze Age copper and bronze shaft-hole axes from this part of Europe are predominantly considered weapons, for real battle and/or ceremonial use⁷. Even more, they were described as being from the beginning innovative weapons, much more lethal and as a result much more appreciated than those known before⁸. If this is true, the evolution they have during MBA, in terms of technological advances, form, and general qualities, can be seen as emphasising exactly this martial feature, be it real or mainly for display. The analysed zone witnesses in addition the presence in deposition of swords (defined as the first weapons serving exclusively for war⁹), daggers (with their ability to assume a martial function along other possible functions and being present in this area in deposition especially as long items¹⁰), massive armguards (certainly having a display feature but at least in some cases part of defensive martial equipment and used as such¹¹), and early spearheads (weapons which could be used in battle as well as in hunting¹²). Drawing the line and counting, the result is that, either expressed in number of categories or in number of items, weapons form the dominant category in the depositional practice, with a small number of ornaments as collateral. This focus on connecting the depositional practice with martial activities can be noticed also in the rest of the territory – interest in the

⁷ Vulpe 1970, 27-36.

⁸ Hansen 2009, 151.

⁹ Alexandrescu 1968, 18.

¹⁰ Kemenczei 1988, 26 (the Bronze Age long daggers from eastern Hungary as thrusting weapons).

¹¹ Kristiansen 2002, 326.

¹² Rusu 1972, 33; Gogâltan 1999, 153.

deposition of shaft-hole axes as an overall characteristic, doubled by the presence of thrusting swords of "Mycenaean" type in central and south-eastern Transylvania and of thrusting swords of Boiu type on the Mureș valley (Map 3) – only that the communities from the western part give a very definite impression that they tried much harder to create a specific and more sophisticated image of the warrior. It is an image built on a melange of access to resources (old, as is the case with copper, and new, as is the case with tin), technological skills and performance, quality of metal, innovation in types and forms, specific and striking decoration, balance between standardisation and uniqueness, and the way in which some of these items end their social life as depositions.

Since the deposition in the analysed zone is mainly build, as already mentioned, on axes, it is only fair to begin the discussion with this category. Based on their form, general appearance and technological characteristics, the shaft-hole axes from this zone can be separated in two groups: "simpler", more "traditional" types and more "innovative", "sophisticated" types.

The first group includes in majority axes of Hajdúsámson type, almost certainly products of the local metallurgy, with their main distribution area between rivers Mureș and Tisza¹³. Several axes attributed to the Pădureni and Monteoru types are also present¹⁴. If their distribution areas known at present reflect the prehistoric reality they are more likely "intruders" coming from the eastern part of the territory¹⁵. Also some Balșa type axes are present on the right bank of the Mureș River, forming the western extremity of this type's distribution (Map 3)¹⁶. Although in general slenderer, lighter, more balanced, and as a result more elegant and probably more efficient¹⁷ than the EBA axes, these MBA types do not sever their ties with their EBA predecessors. Also, despite some characteristics which helped define each MBA type, their common traits overwhelm their dissimilarities¹⁸.

The second group consists of new forms in metal like disc-butted axes (types A1, A2 and the slightly later B1) and early types of long-butted axes (Apa–Nehoiu type),

¹³ Mozsolics 1967, 18; Vulpe 1970, 49-51, Tafel 47/A; Gogâltan 1999, 144-145.

¹⁴ Vulpe 1970, 42-48, Tafel 47/B.

¹⁵ Either as finished items or as borrowed form (for the discussion on the mould from Pir, for casting Monteoru type axes, see Vulpe 1970, 48, Taf. 12/192-193; Bader 1978, 90; Molnár 2011, 287).

¹⁶ Vulpe 1970, 51-53, Tafel 47/A.

¹⁷ In this light can be considered the prolonging of the shaft-hole, for example in the case of the Hajdúsámson type axes, improvement that added to the stability of the shaft and offered higher resistance to shock in comparison with earlier types (Molnár 2011, 286).

¹⁸ Vulpe, Tudor 1970, 423.

joined by a small number of shaft-tube axes, some of the most eastern representatives of the Křtenov type¹⁹. If the long-butted axes could be seen as closer or an exaggerated version of “simpler” types, like Balşa and Hajdúsámson, with their prolonged rounded butt, the disc-butted axes seem to have a stronger personality. The disc-butted axes of types A1 and A2 are mainly characteristic for the area between rivers Tisza and Mureş, although they spread also eastwards and westwards. The disc-butted axes of B1 type have a larger distribution area, with much more defined local variants²⁰. The long-butted axes have a more diffuse distribution area from the start²¹ (Map 3), while also showing a great variety²². These types required special and more developed technological skills, especially the disc-butted axes which needed multi-valve moulds in order to attach the disc to the body. They are characterised by a more striking appearance than their “relatives” from the first group and this makes them more fit for social display. Also, it may be interesting to notice that on the average they are longer than the axes from the first group²³. It is less clear if their greater length was a desired feature, or only an unlooked-for side-effect of their characteristic form. As far as this kind of information results from the archaeological literature, the dimensions of the disc-butted axes are reflected also in their greater weight in comparison with other types (long-butted axes included)²⁴. Anyway, at a first look at least, there seems to be a tendency inside the second group towards a relation between length and the presence of decoration: longer axes are more frequently

¹⁹ Mozsolics 1967, 139-140; Vulpe 1970, 66.

²⁰ Vulpe 1970, Taf. 50/A-B.

²¹ Vulpe 1970, Taf. 47/B.

²² For the high degree of individuality in form and decoration inside this category see David 2002, 283; Vachta 2008, 24.

²³ Most axes of Hajdúsámson type have lengths between 11-17 cm, those of Balşa type 10-15 cm, those of Pădureni type 10-15 cm, and those of Monteoru type 12-16 cm. In comparison disc-butted axes are rarely less than 20 cm long, while there are items reaching even 23-24 cm. On another hand the long-butted axes are shorter, their average length falling rather in the upper echelon of the first group, with rare exceptions like the axe from the Apa hoard, 20 cm long (the lengths of the axes partially taken from Soroceanu 2012, partially estimated after drawings from Vulpe 1970).

²⁴ Unfortunately many axes (as well as other categories of objects) were published without such essential specifications like their weight. The A2 type disc-butted axe from Bogata de Mureş weighs 685 g (Vulpe, Lazăr 2003, 43), the A2 type axe from Apa weighs 669 g, the B1 type axe from Tărian 845 g, the B1 type axes from Ighiel 700 g and 900 (864) g respectively (Soroceanu 2012, 17, 19, 53). In comparison the heaviest items of other types rarely have weights around or more than 600 g, like is the case with the Monteoru axes from the Borlești hoard (weights between 319 and 540 g) (Zamoșteanu 1964, 453-460) and the Monteoru and Pădureni axes from the Parava hoard (weights between 463 and 664 g) (Vulpe 1964, 127-141).

decorated than shorter items of the same type, or – the other way around – the decorated axes tend to be longer²⁵. The rich and sophisticated decoration of their butt and blade, characteristic for the most part of type A1 and A2 disc-butté axes, some variants of the B1 type disc-butté axes, most of the long-butté axes of Apa-Nehoiu type, and the shaft-tube axes from this area, serves as another strong mark of separation, since the axes from the first group are as a rule undecorated (with the questionable exception of the Hajdúsámson type axes²⁶, if the “warts” present on the upper part of some items may be described as decoration).

Of course, the possibility that such a separation makes sense only to the modern way of thinking cannot be totally dismissed. However, this separation in two groups seems to be also sustained by differences in their depositional treatment. While the axes of the first group are usually single finds²⁷, in the case of the disc-butté axes a greater inclination is shown towards their deposition as part of multi-type hoards, together with other remarkable items, like massive armguards and decorated solid-hilted swords²⁸. Less clear is the behaviour of the long-butté axes, the number of depositions being too small in the analysed zone to allow any definite conclusions²⁹.

The swords, the novelty of the MBA, make their appearance also in the discussed zone, in the form of solid-hilted Apa and Au types and more or less related variants. Although they are sometimes present in deposition as single finds, as a rule they accompany axes from the second group in multi-type hoards like those from Hajdúsámson I³⁰ (Hungary), Apa³¹ (Romania), and Zajta³² (Hungary), which means a

²⁵ Such a situation would be far from exceptional. For example, it was documented for the Class A flanged axes in Denmark – the broad face decorated axes have the tendency to be longer than the undecorated ones (Vandkilde 1996, 269, fig. 52).

²⁶ For the separation of the Hajdúsámson type axes in two groups, undecorated and decorated, see Mozsolics 1967, 18 (Cb type).

²⁷ The most prominent exception from this rule is so far the presence of 8 Hajdúsámson type axes in the eponym multi-type hoard (Kemenczei 1991, 8-10, nr. cat. 1; Mozsolics 1967, 139-140, pl. 9-11).

²⁸ Their presence in deposition as part of multi-type hoards is almost at parity with their presence as single finds.

²⁹ At limit, the presence of a decorated Apa – Nehoiu type axe in the multi-type hoard from Apa could be seen as a proof that the behaviour of these axes resembles that of the disc-butté axes, but the presence of the Hajdúsámson type axes in the eponym hoard serves as a warning (see reference no. 22).

³⁰ Kemenczei 1991, 8-10, nr. cat. 1, pl. 1/1, 2/1; Mozsolics 1967, 139-140, pl. 9-11.

³¹ Alexandrescu 1966, 123-126, 170, nr. 12-13, pl. III/1-2; Bader 1972, 85, nr. cat. 4; Bader 1978, 15, 81, 119-120, nr. cat. 5, pl. LXV; Bader 1991, 37-51, nr. cat. 25-26, pl. 5/25, 6/26, 7/26; Mozsolics 1967, 128, pl. 14/1-2, 15/1-2, 16/1-2; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1977, 39, pl. 1/1-6; Popescu,

little bit more often than the swords or the second group axes taken separately are connected in the depositional context with the axes from the first group. But hoards are not the only ground where the solid-hilted swords meet with the second group axes; on the contrary, they give the impression of being tightly connected on several corresponding levels.

The first thing drawing the attention is undoubtedly the way swords and axes are chained together by their sophisticated decoration. The ornamentation of these items represents a whole subject in itself³³. One aspect of particular interest for the present discussion is its “fluid” character. The fact that, despite the common range of motives, each object from both categories is made unique by the choice of motives, registers, combination of motives, and details in their treatment, gives the impression that two goals, opposite but in the same time complementary, were at stake. On one hand, the decoration served as a means of relating all these objects to each other, like the members of the same “family”; on another hand, it offered the opportunity of creating a unique character for each item, without destroying its resemblance to the rest of the “family”. There is no doubt that this dissimilarity in similarity is an interesting and meaningful characteristic.

Secondly, the swords in general represent a proof of technological mastery, since it is necessary to overcome a whole series of technological difficulties no matter of their type. From this perspective, it seems only natural that such items would have been as highly valued, if not higher, as an axe of sophisticated form. Furthermore, solid-hilted swords are considered as especially challenging when it comes to attach the metal hilt to their body. As A. Harding noticed, since solid hilts were the work of the smith and organic hilts the work of the bone or wood carver this means that two different sets of skills were required. Creating organic hilt-plates was the easier, since only the rivets required the metalworker to be involved; casting on metal hilts was very skilled work³⁴, involving heat, moulds, molten metal, as well as decorating and polishing. Even though wood or bone hilts and pommels might have been elaborately decorated, such decoration involved knives and chisels, with the rivets being hammered cold from either side to secure the plate firmly in position. These two sets of procedures seem, to

Rusu 1966, R1, fig. 1-6; Soroceanu 2012, 17-20; Vulpe 1970, 53-56, 66-70, nr. cat. 238, 291, 299, pl. 15/238, 18/291, 20/299

³² Alexandrescu 1966, 125; Alexandrescu 1968, 7; Bader 1972, 89, nr. cat. 91; Kemenczei 1991, 11-13, nr. cat. 10-13, pl. 3/10-13, 4/10-12

³³ For the most thorough and detailed discussion on the subject see David 2002; David 2010.

³⁴ That errors were very likely to appear is a fact proved for example by the Au type sword from Livada, Satu Mare County: the solid hilt was cast with an incomplete pommel, which led to an ulterior intervention for replacing the missing part (Horedt 1962, 106).

modern eyes at least, of different orders of complexity. If it is assumed that more complex, lengthy and difficult tasks lent greater value to the finished object, then solid-hilted swords – especially those with elaborate decoration – were the more valuable objects of the two³⁵. Still, it should be stressed that “value” is a very tricky notion, and this value could have been differently perceived and employed in different cultural milieus. For instance, also during MBA, the “Mycenaean” type rapiers from Transylvania, despite their organic hilts, met with a different set of such difficulties of casting and hafting that in the eyes of their producers and users must have given them as high a value as the solid-hilted swords held for their western neighbours. As a result, such a comparison shows its value only when it involves the use of both hafting systems simultaneously in the same area³⁶. At least for what happens during MBA on this territory it seems that the use of swords with a specific type of hilt went beyond mere preference or access to technological skills towards a definite cultural trait (if we are not afraid of big words). In the present state of research it looks like there was a mutual rejection between the two neighbouring zones: the distribution areas of Apa and Au type swords with their solid hilt and “Mycenaean” type rapiers with their organic hilt show practically no overlapping. Equally interesting may be the fact that the “border”, which is more or less clearly marked by the Mureș valley, is so far the only one which properly accepts (at least at the depositional level) the intrusion of the Boiu-Sauerbrunn swords, which combine the rapier-type blade, short tang and organic hilt, characteristics bringing them closer to the “Mycenaean” type swords, with the decoration of the blade, a feature characteristic for the Apa and Au solid-hilted swords (Map 3). Consequently, it is very possible that the communities living in these two zones were equally proud of their very characteristic swords (or conditioned by them³⁷) and had no intention to replace them with their “neighbours”, no matter how attractive the others might have looked. The solution is of course to look inside the distribution area of the solid-hilted

³⁵ Harding 2007, 104 – the author emphasizing the necessity of carrying more experimental work to compare the time required and difficulty in producing the two distinct hilt types.

³⁶ See for example the discussion in Kristiansen 2002. It is also true that, if the “Mycenaean” rapier from Copșa Mare, Sibiu county (Alexandrescu 1966, 119-120, 169, nr. 7, pl. II/1; Bader 1991, 18, nr. 9, pl. 1/9; Horedt 1961, 11, fig. 1/4) can be considered representative, the metalworkers from Transylvania had no clue when it came to casting solid hilts: the secondary grip of this sword, clearly cast on out of pure necessity (the original hafting-plate had most probably broken completely during use), can be safely described as one of the ugliest and clumsiest metal grips ever made. Still, it should be fair to mention that the result looks functional enough, so if the user was not looking for beauty the result could have been seen as satisfactory.

³⁷ As the difference between the two categories of swords clearly goes beyond their hafting system, it is only logical to presume that they were also handled differently in fight.

swords and see how they behave in comparison with the closest comparable category, which in this case for the local people would have been the daggers³⁸ and long daggers/short swords³⁹.

Interestingly enough, for the analysed zone, no matter if there are shorter or longer items, closer in shape or not to the solid-hilted swords, most of the daggers/long daggers/short swords have a hafting-plate (most often rounded), so they do not share one of the most defining characteristics, the solid hilt, with the swords. Another defining characteristic of the swords of Au and Apa types which is usually absent in the case of the daggers and short swords from the analysed zone is decoration⁴⁰. The few decorated long daggers from this area, although sharing the range of motives with the swords, do not have solid hilt⁴¹. For a part of these items (for example the hafting-plate short swords from the Romanian territory) a good explanation is that they represent the eastern limit of the distribution of Central European types like Varen and Weizen or variants of these types⁴². This makes most of them slightly later than the Apa type swords, but still contemporary with Au type swords. Even in the case of some earlier items, they would have entered this area from the west as finished objects and being received (and perceived) probably as "foreign". More difficult to explain is the absence of the solid hilt for daggers and long daggers very close in their outer line and sometimes decoration to the solid-hilted swords. Since the challenge of casting a solid hilt could not have been greater for daggers than for swords this cannot represent a valid explanation. On another hand, the functional aspect cannot be ruled out. Still it is possible that the differences between daggers (short or long) and swords were considered more important than their similarities and determined a specific approach to each category. As a result, a comparison between the two categories can

³⁸ This comparison has its own weak point, since many dagger types and variants form a category with a high level of chronological uncertainty; for example, they are seen as good indicators only when compared to other categories like ornaments, their archaeological context still being seen as decisive for establishing their chronology (e.g. Gogâltan 1999, 149).

³⁹ Other important questions are where the line should be drawn between such categories as long daggers/short swords and short swords/swords and if only their length should be taken into consideration. In some cases the archaeologists' opinions wavered over time or at least changes were made in the terminology (e.g. the item from Săcueni, Bihor county, with a length of 34.9 cm, was published first as a dagger (Bader 1978, 82, 128, nr. cat. 79, pl. XC/5) and later as a short sword (Bader 1991, 10, nr. cat. 3, pl. 1/3 – where the range for the short swords is between 33 and 43 cm).

⁴⁰ Bader 1991, 10; Kemenczei 1988, 10-14.

⁴¹ Kemenczei 1988, 14 (decorated long daggers with rounded hafting-plate (Variant 3) – only one item in deposition as single find in the analysed zone).

⁴² Bader 1991, 11.

imply that the swords – with their improved length, technological sophistication and usually rich decoration – were imbued with greater “value” than their shorter, smaller, less complicated, not so glamorous “relatives”.

This disjunction between swords and daggers is reflected further in their depositional patterns. While the swords, as already mentioned, are frequently part of multi-type hoards, having the companionship of other remarkable items, the daggers and the short swords are almost without exception single finds⁴³. An interesting aspect of this situation is their lack of association in hoards in the same time in which their functions would have made them presumably good companions in battle. In conclusion, from the depositional level to their overall characteristics, the solid-hilted swords are closer to the second group axes than to the daggers or short swords.

Another category of objects that draws attention in deposition is that of the armguards or protective spiral rings of early types (Apa and Ighiel-Zajta)⁴⁴. Two observations can be made regarding their depositional pattern. Firstly, their presence in multi-type hoards is overwhelming in the analysed zone in comparison with other depositional categories (uncertain single finds). Secondly, their association in these hoards with the disc-butted axes was already emphasized in the archaeological literature: massive, undecorated armguards of Apa type accompany disc-butted axes of types A1-A2; armguards of Ighiel – Zajta type, usually decorated, accompany disc-butted axes of types B1-B2⁴⁵. In fact, for these early types of armguards the frequency of their association with the disc-butted axes reaches 100%. In other words, they present themselves in deposition as strictly connected to this category of axes. This link does not function both ways, since in more than 45% of cases disc-butted axes are deposited as single finds or in multi-type hoards where armguards are not present. As a result, it becomes tempting to consider the armguards as an appendix, or a dependent category, of the disc-butted axes⁴⁶. Still, it should be noticed that – with the exception of the Hajdúsámson I hoard (where 3 disc-butted axes of type A1 are present without armguards) – the hoards from which armguards are absent usually contain B1 type disc-butted axes. Maybe this situation indicates a preference for the association of armguards and axes on a relatively restricted area from the north-

⁴³ The association frequently mentioned in the archaeological literature between an Apa type sword and a long dagger in the Oradea III hoard is uncertain (Alexandrescu 1966, 123-126, 170, nr. 14, pl. IV/1; Bader 1991, 37-51, nr. cat. 27, pl. 6/27, 7/27, 73/A; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1977, 41, pl. 5/1-2 – published as Oradea I; Popescu, Rusu 1966, R2, fig. 1-2; Soroceanu 2012, 56-58).

⁴⁴ Bader 1972, 79; Bader 1978, 103.

⁴⁵ Bader 1972, 88-89; Bader 1978, 103.

⁴⁶ Possibly this association functioned not only in deposition but also in use, as the creation of a set of weapons, one offensive and one defensive.

western part of the analysed territory, the Someş valley, which is also the richest in multi-type hoards. If the association is taken into consideration based on the axes' type, the closest relation is established between the A2 type axes and armguards; if the territorial factor is also introduced into the equation, it can be noticed that the armguards have the tendency to be equally close to the A2 and B1 type axes, but only in the north-western part of the analysed territory. This begins to look like a regional preference, probably stretching on a longer period of time, since the B1 type disc-butt axes are usually considered slightly later than the A types.

Based on their close association with the disc-butt axes armguards may be seen as joining them on the second level of metalwork. But this is not the only aspect that puts them into the spotlight. Although the earliest type armguards are not decorated and probably not as sophisticated as the other categories from the technological point of view, they are still impressive due to their massive aspect. In fact, they are some of the heaviest MBA items in this area, heavier than the disc-butt axes and comparable in weight only with the bigger exemplars of solid-hilted swords⁴⁷. Even if the employment of a great quantity of metal was primarily triggered by functional needs (if their use as defensive equipment is admitted) still that meant one kilogram of bronze showing off on somebody's arm. A good question is, in this case, why metalworkers did not take the pain of decorating such visible items. An interesting aspect is that the later types witness the apparition of decoration and a more delicate outline in the same time with the diminishing of their dimensions and weight, but it is difficult to determine if this represented some kind of compensation or there are other explanations for this situation.

As a result, the metalwork found in deposition in the analysed zone seems to be constructed on two levels: a basic level of less sophisticated types of axes, daggers and short swords, and some sort of "supra-structure" consisting of more sophisticated types of axes and swords, massive armguards, and, much more rarely and usually in later hoards⁴⁸, ornaments like arm-rings, arm-spirals, hair-rings, pendants or pins.

The overall characteristics and interrelations of the earlier types allowed them to be considered as representatives of the Hajdúsámson–Apa metallurgical horizon, circle, or style⁴⁹. The style is a descriptive term for the presence of visual unity and coherence

⁴⁷ For example, the armguard from the Apa hoard weighs 906 g (885 g). In comparison, the A2 type disc-butt axe weighs only 669 g; the bigger of the two Apa type swords weighs 1070 g (1062 g), the smaller one weighs 692 g (682 g) (Soroceanu 2012, 17).

⁴⁸ As it is the case of hoards like those from Szeghalom (Moszolics 1967, 149, Taf. 67-68) or Săpânța (Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1977, 44, pl. 10/1-6, 11/1-4).

⁴⁹ Alexandrescu 1966, 125; 1968, 7; Bader 1991, 37-51; David 2002; Kemenczei 1988, 2; Moszolics 1967; Vachta 2008, 18.

in the material form on a given geographic space⁵⁰, and from this point of view there is little doubt that the metalwork of the analysed zone fits the definition. Although usually it takes a while for a style to be created, the Hajdúsámson–Apa metalwork is rather an exception in that it makes its entrance in the archaeological record as an already fixed style. Even more, in the present state of research, the majority of finds concentrate in an area previously void of metal objects.

First of all it should be mentioned that there is still a certain degree of wavering in the archaeological literature over the chronological framework of the Hajdúsámson–Apa metal style, parallelised to the central European chronology⁵¹ as corresponding loosely or more firmly to Reinecke Bronze A2–B⁵², Bronze A2–B1⁵³, Bronze A2⁵⁴, Bronze B earlier or Bronze A2b–B earlier⁵⁵, Bronze B1⁵⁶. However, as T. Bader was observing two decades ago, it is of no importance if these metal objects are synchronised with Bronze A2 or B1, because this means still EBA for Southern Germany and Nordic region while in the Carpathian–Danube region it is already at least the beginning of MBA⁵⁷. More important for determining the local trends is the fact that, interestingly but perhaps not surprisingly, there seems to be no such wavering in cultural terms, the Hajdúsámson–Apa metalwork being almost unanimously considered as corresponding in time to the Otomani II–Suciu de Sus I–Wietenberg II phases⁵⁸. But some question marks do appear again when it comes to attributing specific finds belonging to this style to a certain cultural milieu. This situation ended in the archaeological literature with these three major MBA cultures disputing the honour of the style's "paternity". The chorology and the stratigraphy were used in combination, for determining the cultural

⁵⁰ Vandkilde 2000, 13.

⁵¹ There was also early criticism regarding the insistence of such attempts of parallelising the local and central European chronological systems (e.g. Vulpe 1971).

⁵² Bader 1978, 132, Anexa nr. 3 (in terms of absolute chronology the first part of the period 1600-1300 BC (Reinecke A2-B – Reinecke C).

⁵³ Bader 1991, 51; Vachta 2008, 9.

⁵⁴ Hänsel 1968 (corresponding to FD III or the transition FD III – MD III); Molnár 2005, 38; 2011, 272 (in terms of absolute chronology 2000/1900-1700/1600 BC).

⁵⁵ David 2002; 2005, 415; 2010, 443; Harding 2007, 72-73.

⁵⁶ Vandkilde 1996, 143, 224-227 – possibly the first part of this period (based also on the correspondence between imported Apa type swords and local swords of Valsømagle and Sögel styles, firmly dated to Period IB).

⁵⁷ Bader 1991, 51 (discussing the Apa type swords from Romania in the context of the Hajdúsámson–Apa metalwork).

⁵⁸ Bader 1978, 74, 132, Anexa nr. 3; 1991, 51; Kacsó 1995, 97; Kacsó 1999, 91-106; Kacsó 2007, 51; Molnár 2005, 38; Molnár 2011, 271, Abb. 10; Vulpe 1970, Vulpe 1971, 309 (probably with an extension at the beginning of phase Otomani III).

connexion: the territorial distribution of finds (in majority depositions) and the settlement finds, including moulds, very important for establishing the corresponding cultural phase for the metal objects. The similarities between the bronze decoration and the decoration of local pottery or other categories of finds (for example decorated bone objects) were also taken into consideration, but the research is hampered by the fact that at the time there was a vast range of motives used on a large territory, from Middle Danube to the Aegean, in various combinations, with local choices and preferences. As a result, the opinions regarding what specific find corresponds to what specific cultural milieu cover a large range and have a rather unpleasant predisposition both towards changes/renewals and come-backs. Main obstacles are the uncertainties regarding the relation between archaeological cultures, territorial limits/control, and chronological frameworks (to put it more simply, it is very difficult for the archaeologists to answer to the main questions: who, when, where and how). In fact, in the analysed zone there is good reason to consider that four archaeological cultures manifest themselves during the time when the Hajdúsámson–Apa metalwork was in use – Otomani, Suciul de Sus, Wietenberg and Mureş (Periam–Pecica/Maros) – and their borders can be described in any other words than “stable”, “fixed” or “clear-cut”. Probably the best term (but admittedly not the most elegant) for the cultural limits in this area would be something like “fuzzy” and, although very unpleasant from the archaeological research point of view, it is a very normal situation. In the present state of research, the main bulk of depositions belonging to the Hajdúsámson–Apa metalwork are connected especially to the areas inhabited by the Otomani and Suciul de Sus communities⁵⁹, but which single find/hoard belongs to whom is more difficult to ascertain.

The sudden transition of this zone from almost no metal at all to such lavishness of sophisticated bronzes certainly requires some explanation. A similar exception was documented for Period IB in Southern Scandinavia, where the Valsømagle style consists in a large variety of bronze weapons with particular forms, in strong contrast with precedent and contemporary style creations. It is considered that this style was created as a powerful instrument of legitimacy and display in the hands of the emerging social elite, in some sort of opposition with a more common existing social order. While the previous metalwork seems produced by common metalworkers for the local clans and community, the Valsømagle metal types give the impression of being created by specialised metalworkers attached to the social elite, and the difference in quality and speed in the style formation is explained as reflecting differences between the respective social contexts⁶⁰. It is certainly tempting to apply a similar explanation to what happens during MBA in the analysed zone, especially

⁵⁹ Alexandrescu 1956, 238; Bader 1978, 74, 132, Anexa nr. 3; Kacsó 1995, 97; Kacsó 2007, 51.

⁶⁰ Vandkilde 2000, 21.

since it shares another particularity with the aforementioned example, namely a specific character of the depositional practice which puts them in evidence in comparison both with what happens before in the area and with what happens in the same time in their respective neighbouring areas. In order to verify such a hypothesis it is necessary to take a look at the context in which this metalwork finds its place, and see if there are signs that similar changes manifest themselves in other segments of the material culture.

Feasts

Interestingly enough, there are, and in a domain which constitutes in the archaeological research the basis for constructing archaeological cultures: pottery.

As already mentioned, the Hajdúsámson–Apa hoards were traditionally considered as corresponding chronologically with the second phase of the Otomani culture and the first phase of the Suciul de Sus culture. New researches on one hand sustain so far the synchronism of the phases Otomani II, Wietenberg II and Suciul de Sus I, despite some question marks still lingering, and on another hand indicate the possibility that at this chronological level the entire Someș plain belonged not to the Otomani culture, but to Suciul de Sus communities⁶¹. In fact, taking into consideration the affinities between the Otomani pottery and the Suciul de Sus pottery, visible especially in the range of motives and the ornamentation techniques, it was considered as probable the formation of the Suciul de Sus culture as an Otomani regionalisation in the specified area. The trigger for starting this process could have been exactly the growing need for metals, which in its turn determined an intensification of habitation in zones closer to raw material sources⁶².

Although evidently an important aspect to be solved, from the point of view of the present discussion the cultural paternity of metalwork is secondary, since both cultures present a series of evolutions and transformations relatively contemporaneous, which come more than probably as a “set” with the production, display and deposition of metal objects, as reflections of deeper social changes. Important changes can be noticed in the pottery domain, more precisely or clearly in the domain of high quality pottery. It was traditionally considered that the dynamic decoration, inter-chained spiral, incision technique, and the Suciul de Sus type cup as a new form are characteristic for Suciul de Sus I⁶³, while the Otomani culture was going

⁶¹ Kacsó 1995, 97; 2007, 51.

⁶² Kacsó 1995, 97-98 (regionalization); Kacsó 2011, 114 (the repertoire taken over and slightly modified by the Suciul de Sus I communities).

⁶³ Bader 1972, 53; Bader 1978, 74.

through a real evolution in the pottery domain between phases I and II. While during the first phase the pottery does not offer a very rich repertoire in form and decoration, the situation undergoes radical changes beginning with phase II: cups decorated with geometric incised motives; more and more cups, plates and mugs; "fish" plates; sieves in various forms. Very important was considered also the use of very fine clay, the chaff used before as lean material being replaced by mica, brought from the Meseş Mountains, in the case of some Otomani communities from a distance of 80-100 km or more. Another interesting aspect was the equivalence, sometimes taken to identity, of the phase II pottery from different settlements of the Otomani culture (such as Sălăcea–Dealul Vida, Socond, Vărşand, Otomani–Cetățuia)⁶⁴. Newer researches seem to minimize the gap between the first two phases of the Otomani culture towards a continuous evolution, since it was noticed that the pottery already begins to change during phase I: portable cooking vessels; mugs and cups with hemispheric body; "classical" decorative motives sometimes present, but only prefiguring their ulterior evolution; new forms like cups and bowls decorated with incipient channelling becoming dominant⁶⁵. Portable cooking vessels are also present in Suciu de Sus I settlements⁶⁶, as well as one-handle decorated cups and mugs, bowls, plates, sieves in different forms⁶⁷. Some of the objects published as sieves, but open at both ends (which logically would make them inappropriate as sieves), are considered to be more probably ember protection devices⁶⁸.

Most of the mentioned pottery categories share several characteristics: they are usually richly decorated, made of high quality materials and represented especially by open forms. This fact situates them at the closing end of the food production and consumption "technological" chain: the end dealing with the consumption of foods and drinks. Even in the cases of coarser pottery, like many sieves and the portable cooking vessels, or more closed forms, like jugs, these categories are closely connected to the serving of foods and drinks. In other words, their role can be described as setting the stage on which those foods and drinks were presented in a certain manner.

It is difficult to determine if the alimentation basis itself changed dramatically with the creation of the new cultural settings in the analysed zone. More probably it did not. So far the archaeological research indicates the existence of a more or less balanced type of economy during MBA, combining agriculture and animal breeding, for the entire

⁶⁴ Ordentlich 1972, 73-77.

⁶⁵ Molnár 2005, 39; Molnár 2011, Abb. 10.

⁶⁶ Kacsó 2011, 110; Pop 2005, 61.

⁶⁷ Pop 2005, 61-62.

⁶⁸ Kacsó 2011, 111-112.

evolution of these cultures⁶⁹ and as such probably not very different from what happens during EBA in this area. It is of course not only very possible but also probable that the range of finished products became larger and more varied, and the courses themselves more sophisticated, a fact suggested by the growing variety of ceramic forms. But the main change seems to take place in the people's **relation** with foods and drinks, or the **perspective** on the **social meaning/importance/value** of eating and drinking. The otherwise natural act of eating and drinking becomes a **social statement**. It becomes important not only to satisfy these basic needs but also the way in which they are satisfied. Eating and drinking cease addressing themselves only to taste and smell, and acquire more and more visual and tactile components, offered by the use of pottery with new and elegant forms, made of high quality clay, carefully finished through polishing and decoration. In other words it looks like the Otomani and Suci de Sus communities were adepts of the proverb saying that people eat with their eyes. And human nature being what it is it does not seem probable that all this richness of form and decoration was meant for private use. On the contrary, everything concurs to indicate a focus on **public consumption** and **social display**.

Putting together the two forms of material culture manifestation – metalwork and pottery – the result is truly interesting, because it gives the impression of dealing with two sides of the same coin. Reducing to essence, the accent is placed on one hand on weapons use, on the other hand on feasts. Both are accepted in the social anthropological literature as activities creating, maintaining and enhancing the prestige of individuals and/or social groups. The excellence in battle and generosity expressed mainly through commensality (offering feasts to superiors, equals and inferiors, to the members of somebody's own group, allies and competitors⁷⁰) are essential qualities in societies with martial ideology, helping in the same time to establish hierarchies not only between individuals but also between social groups. Or, it is clear enough that both domains in their particular way serve to affirm values which were beginning to make their presence generally felt in the society of that time. Even more, in our opinion they share some common elements: the apparition of new, sophisticated forms; the massive exploitation of decoration; the use of new improved technological processes; "imported" raw materials (or more precisely brought from a distance, like copper, tin and mica). The most frequent metal forms make their public think of functions and significations connected to the martial activity and through this to the creation and affirmation of prestige. The most frequent ceramic forms make their public think of an activity seen by many as even more pleasant than fight, the consumption of drinks. It is true that it is difficult to determine what kind of liquids were consumed from those

⁶⁹ Bader 1978, 109-111.

⁷⁰ For the importance of social mechanisms of *potlatch* type see for example Mauss 1924.

cups, mugs and jugs, but a lot of people would be disappointed to find out that they were used only for drinking water or milk. Although these liquids have a powerful symbolic associated to them, and starting from the most basic level, the biological one (sustaining life⁷¹), it is more probable that such feasts would have implicated various drinks a little more alcoholised⁷². Interesting in this context is the frequent presence of sieves; although they could have been used for filtrating milk, for example, their presence could serve as an argument in favour of the consumption of fermented drinks, like beer, since it is known that these are characterised by a thick and unsettled aspect making filtration necessary before drinking. Another argument in favour of beer production could be added by the frequent presence of portable cooking vessels. Similar items found in LBA settlements from this area were put in connection with the boiling of grinded cereals for the production of beer⁷³. Therefore, it becomes tempting to presume that such activities were already developing during MBA in this area, and that the sharing of alcohol during meals was already imbued with social significance for the communities of that period.

The frustrating part of such observations is that, although it is very clear that the metal objects from depositions and the high quality pottery share common elements which make them converge towards creating and expressing a specific image of the society, it is much less clear how such an image should be interpreted. Of course, as already mentioned, ethnographical analogies indicate the possibility of reflecting some kind of emerging hierarchy, but is this the only possible explanation? The problem with the pottery is that is even more complicated than in the case of metal to determine on its basis the existence of a social differentiation. While it is clear that there is a change, based on the present state of research this change cannot be expressed either in terms of quantity or quality. The percentage of high quality pottery in the total of ceramic finds is usually undeterminable for an entire settlement and it is uncertain in what degree extrapolations would work. The representation of high quality pottery inside settlements is equally difficult to be ascertained (e.g. differences between houses' inventories at a level allowing statistical expressivity). Even more, the pottery is often described as extremely similar, and even identical, for a number of sites⁷⁴. Overall, in the absence of more clear proofs of internal settlement differentiations and differentiations between settlements, on one hand, and the presence of a high degree of inter-settlement similarities, on another hand, the pottery seems more likely to express a horizontal structure than a vertical one. This is not to

⁷¹ Venci 1994, 300-301; Wood 2000, 100.

⁷² For the use of alcoholic drinks from Neolithic times see Sherratt 1997.

⁷³ Marta 2005, 125.

⁷⁴ See above note 64.

say that differences in the access to high quality pottery did not exist, or that forms and decorations were not used in order to express vertical social differentiations, only that it is more difficult to be proved. On the other side, the strong similarities of the pottery excavated from different sites speak about very close relations between groups inhabiting neighbouring or more distant settlements, close enough to allow continual exchanges of knowledge, technology, raw materials and finished products. This image offered by the pottery matches the one created by the metalwork's characteristics and both offer certain clues on a third factor of this equation: travels.

Travels

An essential trait of any material culture is that it is based on the spatial and temporal distribution of a series of material forms. As an understatement it sounds very boring, but it must be mentioned because this situation leads to the risk of placing too strong an accent on the objects themselves and transforming them, in a way of speaking, into subjects. As a result, too often in the archaeological literature objects get the entire spotlight to the detriment of the people who created them, used them and offered them meaning. A good example is the way objects "move" on a given territory, as if on their own will, and an innovation or invention "spreads", like seeds carried by the wind, when all the time it should be remembered that behind any such "movement" lies a human action.

Any cultural milieu is the result of contacts between people. In order to acquire certain uniformity, if not necessarily standardisation, in the material culture, the communication between individuals and groups as social actors is a prerequisite. In other words, people's movement on shorter or longer distances, carrying with them objects, ideas and knowledge, is an essential part of creating and maintaining material culture in a specific form. As usually this is not a predetermined result of such actions – everybody will agree that people have better reasons for moving around than the thrilling thought that they take part in such a glorious enterprise as creating a culture – the said result can become somewhat of a puzzle to the outside observers (like archaeologists unfortunately are), for the simple fact that it has nothing to do with logic, but with people's needs, demands, opinions, choices and limitations (and so on...). There are so many factors to take into consideration when a cultural background is created and then kept functioning that any interpretation becomes equally wrong or equally right. This situation, of course, never stopped archaeologists from trying.

Consequently, this subchapter should be about travels, not about distributions. And, of course, about people who travel. And only in the backstage about ideas and objects that travel thanks to the people. Unfortunately, it is a little bit difficult to

proceed this way when the only proof of people's movements is the archaeological record – the distribution of finds. As such, the discussion begins with the objects in order to get to the people.

It was already mentioned that, based on pottery characteristics of which some were shortly discussed in the previous subchapter, two archaeological cultures were defined for the discussed zone, Otomani and Suciul de Sus. During the second phase of the Otomani culture and first phase of the Suciul de Sus culture (considered contemporaneous), the style creation in pottery is doubled by a style creation in bronze. Characteristic or close enough looking objects, both in clay and metal, can be found, with various intensities, across the space occupied by these two cultural milieus, but also beyond what can be safely considered their borders, in other cultural settings.

The pottery found outside its own cultural limits is usually identified as high quality pottery with open forms. Such a situation cannot be exploited at its full value, as long as on one hand cooking pottery many times cannot be culturally differentiated anyway, and on another hand containers used for transporting foods or drinks were most probably made of materials which did not survive. Still, as it is a little difficult to imagine people carrying from settlement to settlement cups and mugs full of beer, it is quite clear that either in certain circumstances high quality pottery with open forms became interesting in itself for communities with different material culture (some sort of "exotica"), or it represented a sign of special relations between individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds (hosting or gift exchange). Other explanations can be taken into consideration from case to case, including not so pleasant ones, like for example the existence of booty as a result of armed confrontations. As already mentioned, inside the cultural limits of Otomani and Suciul de Sus, respectively, the pottery tends to be very expressive and the similarities in form and decoration are often very strong. This indicates in our opinion equally strong relations between communities which allowed new forms and decorations to be adopted very fast on relatively large areas.

The metalwork shows a somewhat similar pattern, in that what can be considered as most typical representatives of metal categories are usually found inside the limits of these two cultures. Likewise, metal objects are circulated also beyond these limits⁷⁵, although the resulting patterns of distribution tend to be rather different from those of pottery, especially in that they sometimes end their social life in much farther areas, as is the case with Hajdúsámson–Apa swords found in Southern Scandinavia⁷⁶, or dis-budded axes on river Oder⁷⁷. This indicates a wider area of circulation for metalwork,

⁷⁵ See also the first subchapter and Map 3.

⁷⁶ Vandkilde 1996.

⁷⁷ Nestor 1938.

situation that can have various explanations, in terms of practicality (metal resists better than baked clay to transportation), basic value (expressed in the quantity of bronze represented by a certain object which could be recycled), or social value attached to it (inclusively in terms of functions and meanings).

As a result, it can be postulated that travels represented a constant in the life of these MBA communities. It can also be presumed that short-range contacts were rather the norm, especially inside the cultural limits⁷⁸, their frequency and intensity probably decreasing with distance, although exceptions no doubt existed (as long as territorial proximity and social proximity do not always run along, and no doubt many of these contacts were triggered by social reasons). Long-range contacts cannot be excluded, especially when we look at the distribution maps of metalwork, but it cannot be taken for granted either, as long as objects can also be moved on such great distances in a down-the-line system, passing through a lot of hands on their way.

With this we arrive to the people themselves, the reasons which made them move around and the last subchapter of the present discussion.

Incentives for hoarding, feasting and travelling

These three activities may have a lot more in common than it shows at a superficial look, as all represent important investments made by people in terms of time, effort, and expense. All of them implicate certain risks, ranging from economic to social or supernatural ones, not to forget the fact that they can turn out to be life-threatening experiences at any false step, and sometimes even in the absence of any false step. More, the available archaeological data represent indications that for the MBA communities living in the analysed zone, all three are interconnected, being perceived as intertwining shreds in the larger social fabric of that time.

*"A metaphorical skeleton of metal"*⁷⁹... and *"cups that cheered"*⁸⁰. Human activities such as brandishing a sword or an axe in order to smash some heads and throwing a successful party (again in order to smash some heads but in a different sense of the word) somehow do not seem to match perfectly in the same picture. From this perspective, putting together a metaphorical skeleton of metal, build in this case by the society on bronze objects with clear references to martial activities, and a table full

⁷⁸ Of course, it remains to be discussed what "short-range" would have meant for the communities of those times. For example, for Palaeolithic societies it was calculated that the social proximity – expressed probably frequently in marriage terms – could stretch on distances up to 300 km (Gamble 1982).

⁷⁹ Hoskins 1989, 166.

⁸⁰ Sherratt 1997 – part of the article's title.

of cheerful people washing their throats with cheering cups of alcohol sounds a little farfetched. Still, in a twisted kind of way it could turn to be the most logical association in the world, if the assumption made in the article's title proves to be right and the way the society's image builds itself is a response to (between other things) specific environmental conditions, on one hand, and landscape and territorial control, on another hand. These two factors will be shortly discussed in turn.

*"Guess who's coming to dinner"*⁸¹. Is there any connection between environmental conditions and community meals? Of course, and on several different levels; still, here the interest is not so much on the relation between food production and environment as on the social effects of a specific environment on food consume. What jumps to the eye when the environment of the analysed zone is taken into consideration is that traditionally was a little bit too wet⁸²; in other words large areas were covered with swamps, and the areas exempted from this fate were predictably flooded during spring and autumn, and less predictably during other parts of the year.

Living in a swamp certainly offers some advantages. Between other things it was discussed the possibility that the lands became more fertile consequent to their flooding⁸³. The defensive aspect cannot be excluded, swamps offering natural protection, and a lot of Otomani communities used the situation to their advantage. Clearly there are also some disadvantages, like prolonged draughts or, on the contrary, massive floods leading to the destruction of harvest and animal stock, and specific diseases, like malaria and sickle-cell anemia, affecting the people. The main problem could have become in time the instability of the area from the hydrographical point of view and the modifications noticed in time, like for example variations of the river courses⁸⁴.

From another point of view there is also the small problem of access through this marshy land, for some areas being most probably necessary wooden paths, connecting a settlement to its agricultural land and pastures and to neighbouring settlements. It is true that such a disadvantage could turn into an advantage in certain conditions: for example the fact that the main access east-west in the northern part of the area was on the Someş valley offered a strategic advantage to the local communities. Even more,

⁸¹ An older but well-known movie showing between other things the risks of inviting somebody to dinner.

⁸² In order to offer a picture of how wet exactly, it should be mentioned that, starting with year 1968, 50,000 ha of swamps were desiccated, as they were considered unproductive land, exactly in the analysed area, between rivers Someş and Barcău (Benedek 1969, 32).

⁸³ Bader 1978.

⁸⁴ Benedek 1969.

marshy lands necessitate local knowledge in order to be dealt with by travellers, if they do not want to end their life swallowed by a swamp.

Turning back to one of these observations, the continual changes of the hydrographical basin lead to apparition and disappearance of water courses, modification of water courses, natural desiccation of marshy areas, and transformation of dry land into swamp. This situation would have had an important impact not only on access routes, but on the life of the local communities as a whole. For example, MBA settlements from this area were abandoned because environment changes made life too difficult⁸⁵. If the continual transformation of the area is a reality, no doubt it represented a major stress for the local communities, way beyond the survival of harvests and animals. It is very possible that this situation triggered some sort of "juridical" difficulties connected to the rights of exploiting and controlling certain lands, because, no matter what kind of relation exists between a community and the lands that ensure its subsistence, such changes mean that what was up to a certain moment agricultural land became a swamp and the other way around. Such a situation could lead to the disappearance of production units, disappearance or removal of communities, or attempts to exploit other lands. This is the right moment to mention that the archaeological researches in the area offer the image of a densely populated space. A densely populated space and a situation of economic stress do not represent an ideal combination, a possible result being the escalation of conflicts. Such a situation could have ended tragically for one or both sides (being small communities, the effort could prove fatal not only for the defeated, but also for the winners), and represents the ideal background for the development of social mechanisms of *potlatch* type. This kind of mechanism is very comfortable as an explanation for it combines two traits reflected in this area by the presence of metalwork hoards and high quality pottery: the focus on feasts and the focus on destroying/removing from the community important material possessions in an attempt to gain prestige and establish individual and group hierarchies. All the above observations lead to the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary for any community wanting to survive to create and maintain specific connections with its neighbours.

"Beware of thy neighbour..."? It can be safely stated that any living human being (except maybe some ascetic character inhabiting a cave somewhere on a mountain top – and see what *his* answer would be if asked why has he made that choice) would have something to complain about when it comes to the subject of neighbours. At their best they are annoying and at their worst they become dangerous. When these

⁸⁵ Ordentlich 1965, 420; Ordentlich 1972.

neighbours happen also to be relatives, the combination is even worse, since the social net normally forces members of the same social group to stick together. As a result it cannot come as a surprise that neighbours and/or relatives may be at one time needed and at other time feared, or even needed and feared in the same time.

And, as there seems that the MBA communities in the analysed zone frequently visited each other and engaged in pleasant activities like eating and drinking, this means that the advantages surpassed the disadvantages.

Most of the food and drinks at the disposal of the prehistoric communities have a perishable character: this reality increases the desirability of consuming **fast** some categories of food and drinks, during their season or immediately after preparation (beer?), in order to cut the losses. The communities are forced this way to implicate themselves in exchange, on one hand in order to fructify their surplus, on the other hand to obtain products and preservation means like salt in order to secure a longer life for their own food. Feasting in these conditions would have represented a very handy and in the same time useful in social terms way of maximising the gains and reducing the loss, because as a social event implicated reciprocity, and as such created an ascendant spiral of invitations between neighbouring communities in different moments of the year, easing the economic stress.

Keeping close contacts with the neighbours was also absolutely necessary for the construction and maintenance of paths (including wooden paths and bridges). Some of them would have been constructed for the use of a single community (access to water, fields, agricultural lots, other resources), but others would have offered access to neighbouring communities or to larger routes, so in such cases two or more communities had to collaborate for this purpose. If we look at the disparity between the size of some settlements and the volume of work implicated in the building and maintenance of defensive systems, help was no doubt necessary also here from neighbours/relatives.

Speaking of the size of the settlements, it is clear that the habitable space is much reduced in some cases, sometimes exactly because of the space occupied by defensive works⁸⁶, situation which raises some questions about the number of people living there. The communities seem often to be so small, if it is to estimate the number of members based on the habitable space (that is, if they did not live like sardines in a can), that the logic dictates they had no other option than exogamy, that is to be part of marriage networks, if they wanted to survive both genetically and socially. This would have led in consequence to continuous relations at least between neighbouring communities: visits to the nuclear family of orientation (the group that provided the

⁸⁶ For example, the habitable space of the settlement from Otomani – Cetățuia was only 25 m long (Ordentlich 1965, 420; Bader 1978, 36).

spouse that left home at marriage) with different occasions (seasonal ceremonies, births, comings of age, marriages, funerals); working the lots received as marriage settlement or as inheritance (in present days, in the countryside, families often reserve a part of the agricultural season for working the fields received as dowry by women married outside their own village – this can implicate a journey of several kilometres every day for a number of days). On another hand, ethnographic studies show that in the case of marriage networks the line between friendly relations and conflicts is very thin⁸⁷. In such cases it would have been undoubtedly a very good idea to visit your neighbours with a weapon at hand, since the more frequent the meetings between members of neighbouring communities, the stronger the risk of quarrelling.

“Beware of thy neighbour...”? Part 2. What about more distant neighbours, both in terms of space and of social proximity?

One interesting aspect evidenced by the distribution maps regards the relative rupture between the two zones, central and SE Transylvania and the NW part of the analysed territory, marked by the Mureș valley, first of all in depositional terms (Map 2). This separation seems even more underlined by the relative lack of decorated metal items in central and SE Transylvania⁸⁸ in comparison with the NW part (Map 3). It is very possible that the relations between these neighbouring cultures were as a rule pacific, but in the same time it looks like there is a reciprocal rejection at least at some levels: they do not seem to be as eager as it could be expected to borrow metalwork from each other. The situation requires an explanation, and three variants come to mind.

It is of course possible that although decorated items were circulated **and** used in central and SE Transylvania they were exempted for various reasons from deposition; if this is the explanation there is practically no way of proving it.

Another possibility is that decorated metal items were circulated **but not** used in central and SE Transylvania – they would have been present only while transported to other areas (and the few finds known so far either “escaped” the rules or otherwise indicate an action taken by outsiders). This second variant implies that exchange/barter took place between Otomani/Suciu de Sus communities and Wietenberg communities, but the final destination of the objects was either from the start intended for outside communities, and the Wietenberg communities acted only as middlemen, or were received in the Wietenberg cultural milieu but sent further or

⁸⁷ See for example a study on traditional Transylvanian marriage networks, which clearly shows that most frequently quarrels and broken bones occurred during spouse “hunting” in neighbouring villages (Șișeșteanu 1983). In *Njal’s Saga* a visit to a neighbour ends in a generalized war.

⁸⁸ If it is not an artificial creation of the present state of research, in which case any moment new finds can change dramatically the overall image.

recycled because lack of interest in them. In this case an explanation would be that the difference in style of the respective metalwork was so clearly delimited that its use in parallel with the local metalwork was not an option. Since at this moment there are known from Transylvania a few undecorated disc-budded axes of A type as well as undecorated variants of B type axes (Map 3), the rejection seems to be directed not so much against the **shape** of these axes as it is against their **decoration**. If this is true it could be postulated that the decoration of the Otomani/Suciu de Sus metalwork was so embedded in their society that it was perceived as a strong social statement not only in the interior but also by the neighbouring communities belonging to different cultural milieus. If the decoration was an indubitable sign of belonging to an Otomani or Suciu de Sus social group, this explains why Wietenberg individuals or groups would not have been in a hurry to adopt and display them. In the same line of reasoning, the Otomani or Suciu de Sus communities would have been equally unwilling to offer to “foreigners” metal objects which served as local social insignia and had specific meanings. If the decoration “beats” the shape in terms of social expressivity this would explain why the undecorated items show a stronger inclination to be present in Transylvania.

A third possibility is that this kind of items was as a rule **neither** circulated, **nor** used in this area. The third scenario only takes things a step further than the second variant with the supposition that a kind of mild prehistoric-style “embargo” was imposed either to specific categories of goods or to whatever came from the Otomani/Suciu de Sus area as a whole. This “embargo” could have had natural (the difficulties in transportation – long distance, natural obstacles, lack of direct routes) or social (competition) reasons. As long as the Mureş valley acted as the main route during MBA and seems to have had been under the control of the Mureş communities on the Lower Mureş (Periam, Pecica)⁸⁹ and of the Wietenberg communities on the Upper Mureş, it looks that this did not leave a lot of possibility of manoeuvre for the Otomani/Suciu de Sus communities living further west and north-west. Either they received what they needed (and there are great chances that they needed a lot of things from Transylvania) from the Wietenberg communities – directly (a route going up north and then towards west on the Someş valley, surrounding the Western Carpathians at the north) or indirectly (through the Mureş communities, on the Lower Mureş and then up north, surrounding the Western Carpathians from the south and west) (Map 4). Never mind the distance and the time needed for the goods to travel (the time would have been shortened in theory and made easier by the transportation on water⁹⁰ at least for a part of the journey), in fact the exchange would have been

⁸⁹ O’Shea 2011.

⁹⁰ O’Shea 2011, 161.

conditioned first by the good relations between the Otomani/Suciu de Sus communities and Wietenberg communities and second by how disposed were the Mureș communities to act like middlemen or to allow the access of individuals or groups on this route. Even if the relations were great either way, it should not come as a surprise the eventuality, for some western communities at least, of looking for new opportunities of exchange. Such an opportunity would have been provided by trying to create a bypass to the southern route on the Mureș valley and the territory controlled by the Wietenberg communities. The only alternative was going east using a much northern route than was possibly used at that time by the Wietenberg communities, connecting the Someș valley to the territory outside the Eastern Carpathians through the Bicaz mountain pass (Map 4 – the northern route marked)⁹¹. It seems there is a connection between the western part (especially the Someș valley) and the communities beyond the Eastern Carpathians – a route traversing directly the northern part of Transylvania, and reflected in several very interesting finds in Moldova, such as the Hajdúsámson–Apa sword from Piatra Șoimului⁹² and the decorated disc-butted axe of A2 type from Cajvana⁹³. In this light, the Wietenberg advance towards north and the Upper Someș, especially during the third phase of this culture⁹⁴, as well as the possible tensions between Costișa and Monteoru communities reflected in the Monteoru advance towards north in Moldova could be explained in terms of attempts to control resources and access routes⁹⁵.

Summing up, even allowing for continuous (or rather discontinuous?) peaceful relations between these neighbouring cultural milieus, some sort of competition makes itself visible in their behaviour, undoubtedly triggered as much by social reasons as by economic ones. As such, this external competition does nothing more than to accompany the internal competition discussed above. This competition is manifested in parallel with very clear signs of the construction of a local social identity, expressed through specific forms and decorations of the material culture. Even more, it is very possible that exactly the competitive character of the local

⁹¹ Travelling from the Someș valley to Moldova on this route (around 300 km) would have lasted, either by foot or using an oxen-cart, approximately one month (estimation based on calculations made for the Roman times – a travel on a similar distance, the military road between Sarmizegetusa and Porolissum, took 23.4 days – the source is orbis.stanford.edu / The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World).

⁹² Munteanu, Dumitroaia 2009, 323-328.

⁹³ Ignat 2000, 31-32, cat. no. 8.1, fig. 6.

⁹⁴ Bejinariu 2005, 94.

⁹⁵ Popescu, Băjenaru 2008, 14-15.

communities helped strengthening their perception of themselves as part of a larger social network.

In conclusion, the image offered by the society of the analysed zone fits extremely well in the general framework of the European MBA, at a time of social change and focus on new kinds of social display. In the same time, the general trends are not simply adopted but very clearly adapted to the local conditions, the society creating this way its own specificity.

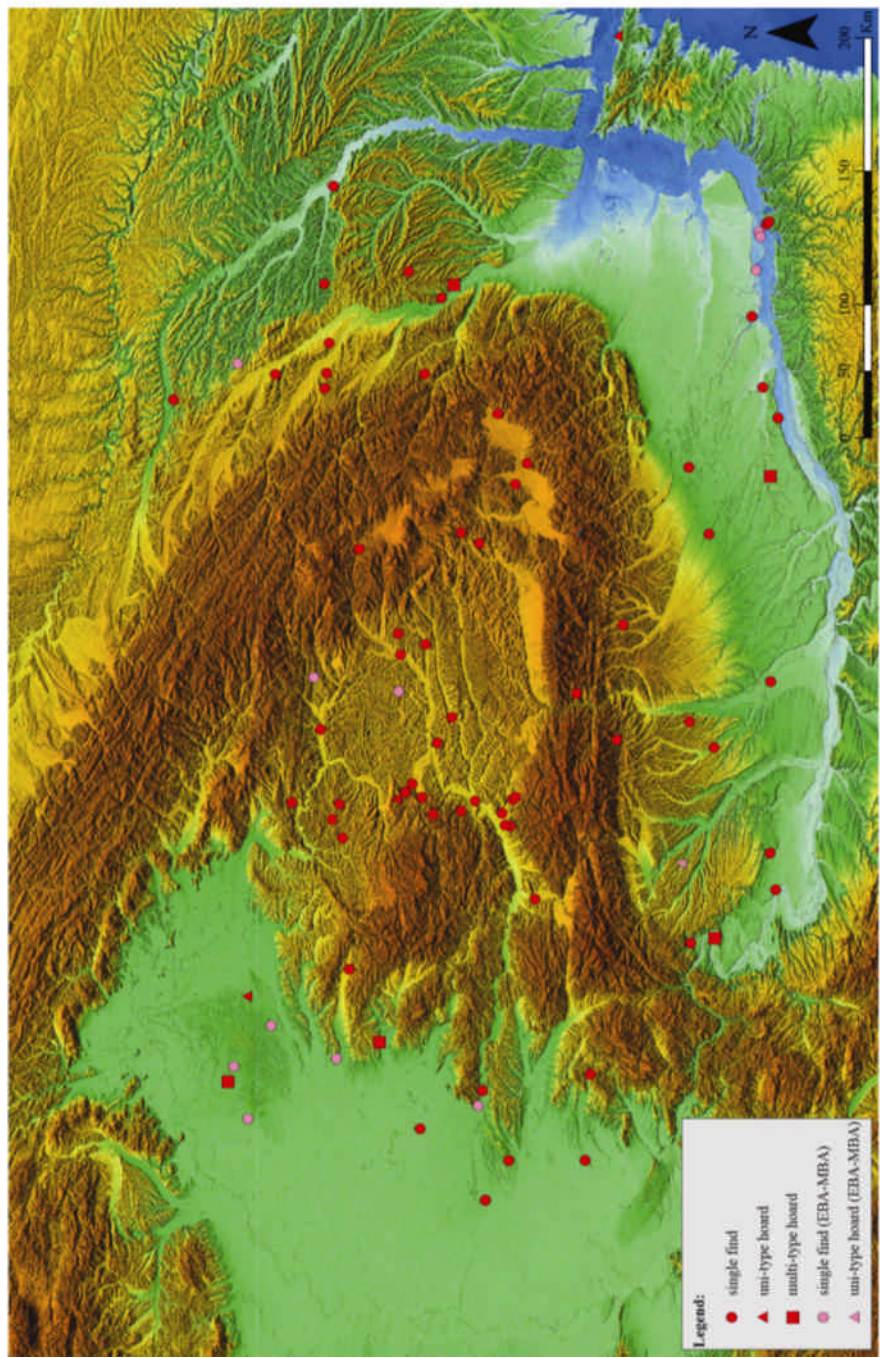
Bibliography

- Alexandrescu, A.D. 1956, *În legătură cu spadele de bronz de pe teritoriul R.P.R.*, SCIV 7, 3-4, 237-242.
- Alexandrescu, A.D. 1966, *Die Bronzeschwerter aus Rumänien*, Dacia, N.S. 10, 117-189.
- Alexandrescu, A.D. 1968, *Spadele de bronz de pe teritoriul R.S. România*, Rezumatul tezei de doctorat în istorie, Universitatea București, Facultatea de Istorie, București.
- Bader, T. 1972, *Apărătorul de braț în bazinul carpato-danubian*, StComSatu Mare 2, 85-100.
- Bader, T. 1978, *Epoca bronzului în nord-vestul României. Cultura pretracică și tracică*, București.
- Bader, T. 1991, *Die Schwerter in Rumänien*, PBF IV, 8, Stuttgart.
- Bejinariu, I. 2005, *Stadiul cercetării epocii bronzului și primei epoci a fierului pe teritoriul Sălajului*, StComSatu Mare 22, 1, 93-98.
- David, W. 2002, *Studien zu Ornamentik und Datierung der bronzezeitlichen Depotfundgruppe Hajdúsámson-Apa-Ighiel-Zajta*, Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis 18, Alba Iulia.
- David, W. 2005, *Gold and Bone Artifacts as Evidence of Mutual Contact between the Aegean, the Carpathian Basin and Southern Germany in the Second Millennium BC*, Aegeum 27, *Between the Aegean and Baltic Seas. Prehistory across Borders, Proceedings of the International Conference Bronze and Early Iron Age Interconnections and Contemporary Developments between the Aegean and the Regions of the Balkan Peninsula, Central and Northern Europe*, University of Zagreb, 11-14 April 2005, 411-420.
- David, W. 2010, *Die Zeichen auf der Scheibe von Nebra und das altbronzezeitliche Symbolgut des Mitteldonau – Karpatenraums*, Meller, H., Bertemes, F. (Hrsg.), *Der Griff nach den Sternen, Internationales Symposium in Halle (Saale) 16-21 Februar 2005*, Tagungen des Landesmuseums für Vorgeschichte Halle, Band 05.
- Emódi, I. 2006-7, *Observații privind proveniența staniului folosit în epoca bronzului*, StComSatu Mare, Seria arheologie 23-24, 1, 109-110.

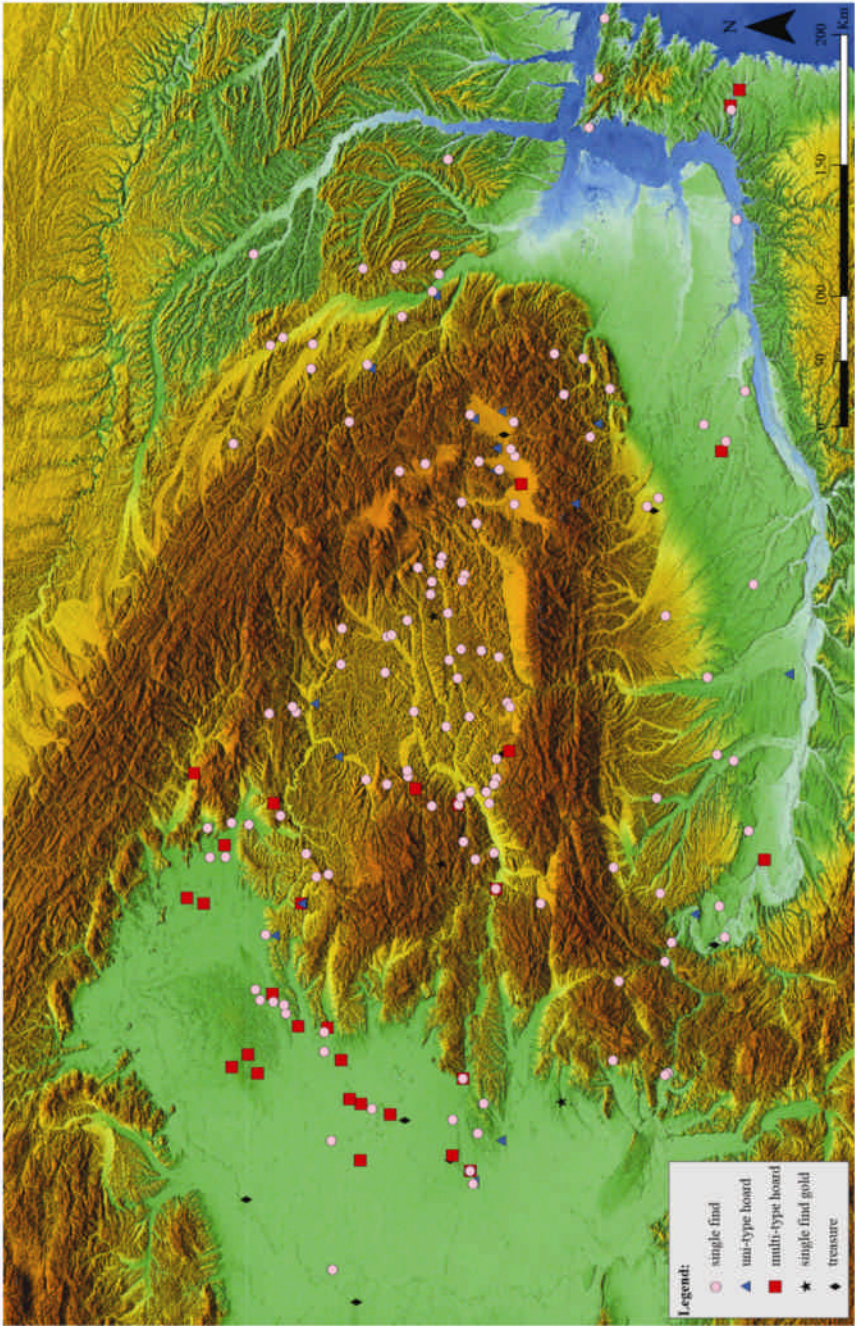
- Ellen, R., Platten, S. 2011, *The social life of seeds: the role of networks of relationships in the dispersal and cultural selection of plant germplasm*, JRAI 17, 3, 563-584.
- Gamble, C. 1982, *Interaction and Alliance in Palaeolithic Society*, Man (N.S.) 17, 92-107.
- Gogâltan, F. 1999, *Bronzul timpuriu și mijlociu în Banatul românesc și pe cursul inferior al Mureșului. Cronologia și descoperirile de metal*, Timișoara.
- Guilaine, J., Zammit, J. 2005, *The Origins of War. Violence in Prehistory*, Blackwell Publishing (original published in 2001; the English version translated by Melanie Hersey).
- Harding, A. 2007, *Warriors and Weapons in Bronze Age Europe*, Archaeolingua Series Minor 25, Budapest.
- Hänsel, B. 1968, *Beiträge zur Chronologie der mittleren Bronzezeit im Karpatenbecken*, I-II, Bonn.
- Hansen, S. 2009, *Kupferzeitliche Äxte zwischen dem 5. und 3. Jahrtausend in Südosteuropa*, Dietrich, L., Dietrich, O., Heeb, B., Szentmiklosi, A. (eds.), *Aes aeterna. Omagiu domnului Tudor Soroceanu, cu ocazia împlinirii a 65 de ani*, Analele Banatului, S.N. 17, 141-160.
- Horedt, K. 1962, *Spada de bronz de la Livada*, SCIV 13, 1, 105-109.
- Hoskins, J. 1989, *Why Do Ladies Sing the Blues? Indigo Dyeing, Cloth Production, and Gender Symbolism in Kodi*, Weiner, A.B., Schneider, J. (eds.), *Cloth and Human Experience*, Washington D.C., 142-173.
- Ignat, M. 2000, *Metalurgia în epoca bronzului și prima epocă a fierului din Podișul Sucevei, Suceava*.
- Kacsó, C. 1995, *Noi date cu privire la prima fază a culturii Suci de Sus*, Apulum 32, 83-99.
- Kacsó, C. 1999, *Neue Daten zur ersten Phase der Suci de Sus – Kultur*, Boroffka, N., Soroceanu, T. (Hrsg.), *Transsilvanica. Archäologische Untersuchungen zur älteren Geschichte des Südöstlichen Mitteleuropa. Gedenkschrift für Kurt Horedt*, Internationale Archäologie, Studia honoraria 7, 91-106.
- Kacsó, C. 2007, *„Importuri” Suci de Sus în culturile epocii bronzului din Transilvania*, Revista Bistriței 21, 1, 43-62.
- Kacsó, C. 2011, *Contribuții la cunoașterea ceramicii Suci de Sus. Descoperirile din Depresiunea Maramureșului*, Revista Bistriței 25, 103-129.
- Kemenczei, T. 1988, *Die Schwerter in Ungarn I*, PBF IV, 6, München.
- Kemenczei, T. 1991, *Die Schwerter in Ungarn II*, PBF IV, 9, Stuttgart.
- Kristiansen, K. 2002, *The Tale of the Sword – Swords and Swordfighters in Bronze Age Europe*, OJA 21, 4, 319-332.
- Marinescu, G. 1983, *Două noi spade de bronz descoperite în Transilvania*, Apulum 21, 57-65.

- Marta, L. 2006-7, *Groapa 154 a aşezării din epoca bronzului de la Lazuri. Depunere de obiecte aflate în legătură cu producerea berii preistorice?*, StComSatu Mare, Seria arheologie 23-24, 1, 111-130
- Mauss, M. 1924, *Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques*, Année Sociologique, 2^{eme} Série, I, Paris
- Molnár, Zs. 2005, *Habitatul culturii Otomani din Câmpia Careiului și Valea Eriului*, Satu Mare. Studii și comunicări 22, 1, 33-60
- Molnár, Zs. 2011, *Die Bronze metallurgie in den Otomani–Gemeinschaften von der Carei – ebene und dem Eriul – tal*, ActaArchHung 62, 269-328.
- Mozsolics, A. 1967, *Bronzefunde des Karpatenbeckens–Depotfundhorizonte von Hajdúsámson und Kosziderpadlás*, Budapest
- Munteanu, R., Dumitroaia, Gh. 2008-9, *Spada de bronz de la Piatra Șoimului*, MemAntiq 25-26, 323-328
- Nestor, I. 1938, *Die verzierten Streitäxte mit Nackenscheibe aus Westrumänien*, Marburger Studien (Festschrift Gero von Merhart), 178-192
- Ordentlich, I. 1965, *Sisteme de fortificații în aşezarea eponimă a culturii Otomani*, RevMuz 2, 420.
- Ordentlich, I. 1972, *Contribuția săpăturilor arheologice de pe „Dealul Vida” (com. Sălacea, jud. Bihor) la cunoașterea culturii Otomani*, StComSatu Mare 2, 63-84.
- O’Shea, J.M. 2011, *A River Runs Through It: Landscape and the Evolution of Bronze Age Networks in the Carpathian Basin*, Journal of World Prehistory 24, 161-174 .
- Petrescu-Dîmbovița, M. 1977, *Depozitele de bronzuri din România*, București.
- Pop, D. 2005, *Câteva considerații privind stadiul cercetării culturii Suciul de Sus și a grupului Lăpuș*, Satu Mare. Studii și comunicări 22, 1, 61-92.
- Popescu, D., Rusu, M. 1966, *Dépôts de l’âge du Bronze Moyen*, Inventaria Archaeologica, 1, R 1-14.
- Rusu, M. 1972b, *Metalurgia bronzului din Transilvania la începutul Hallstattului*, Rezumatul tezei de doctorat, Universitatea „Al. I. Cuza” Iași, Facultatea de Istorie Filozofie, Iași.
- Sherratt, A. 1997, *Cups that Cheered: The Introduction of Alcohol to Prehistoric Europe*, Sherratt, A. (ed.), *Economy and Society in Prehistoric Europe. Changing Perspective*, 376-402.
- Soroceanu, T. 2012, *Die Kupfer- und Bronzedepts der frühen und mittleren Bronzezeit in Rumänien / Depozitele de obiecte din cupru și bronz din România. Epoca timpurie și mijlocie a bronzului*, Archaeologia Romanica, V, Cluj-Napoca.
- Șișeșteanu, Gh. 1983, *Practici culturale de regionalizare a spațiului social. Forme de complementaritate a statuturilor sociale ale tineretului în timpul sărbătorilor de iarnă*, ActaMP 7, 707-718

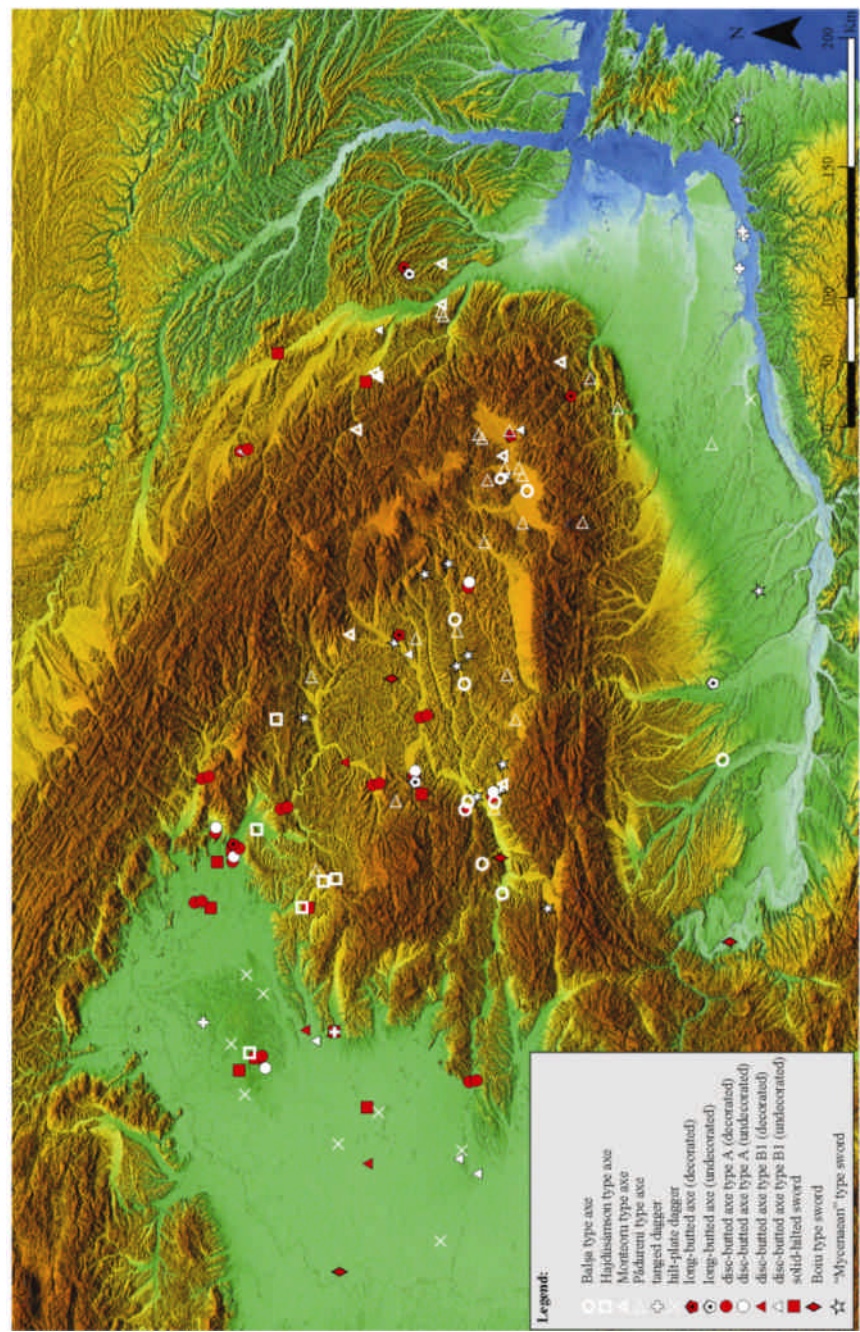
- Țârlea, A. 2012, *Obiceiul depunerii în spațiul carpato-balcanic în epoca bronzului și în prima epocă a fierului* (in preparation).
- Vachta, T. 2008, *Studien zu den bronzezeitlichen Hortfunden des oberen Theissgebietes*, Bonn.
- Vandkilde, H. 1996, *From stone to bronze. The metalwork of the Late Neolithic and Earliest Bronze Age in Denmark* (with a contribution by Peter Northover), Jutland Archaeological Society Publications XXXII, Aarhus.
- Vandkilde, H. 2000, *Material Culture and Scandinavian Archaeology: A Review of the Concepts of Form, Function and Context*, Olausson, D., Vandkilde, H. (eds.), *Form, Function and Context. Material culture studies in Scandinavian archaeology*, Lund, Sweden, 3-50.
- Vencl, S. 1994, *The archaeology of thirst*, Journal of European Archaeology 2, 2, 299-326.
- Vulpe, A. 1964, *Cu privire la unele topoare de aramă și bronz din Moldova*, ArhMold 2-3, 127-141.
- Vulpe, A., Tudor, E. 1970, *Cu privire la topoarele de metal cu gaură de înmănușare transversală*, SCIV 21, 3, 417-427.
- Vulpe, A. 1970, *Äxte und Beile in Rumänien I*, PBF IX, 2, München.
- Vulpe, A. 1971, *Cu privire la sistemul cronologic al lui B. Hänsel pentru epoca mijlocie a bronzului*, SCIV 22, 2, 301-312.
- Vulpe, A. 1975, *Äxte und Beile in Rumänien II*, PBF IX, 6, München.
- Vulpe, A., Lazăr, V. 2003, *Toporul de luptă de bronz de la Bogata de Mureș*, Marmatia 7, 1, 43-56.
- Wood, J. 2000, *Food and drink in European prehistory*, European Journal of Archaeology, 3, 1, 89-111.
- Zamoșteanu, M. 1964, *Depozitul de topoare de bronz de la Borlești (raionul Buhuși, reg. Bacău)*, ArhMold 2-3, 453-460.



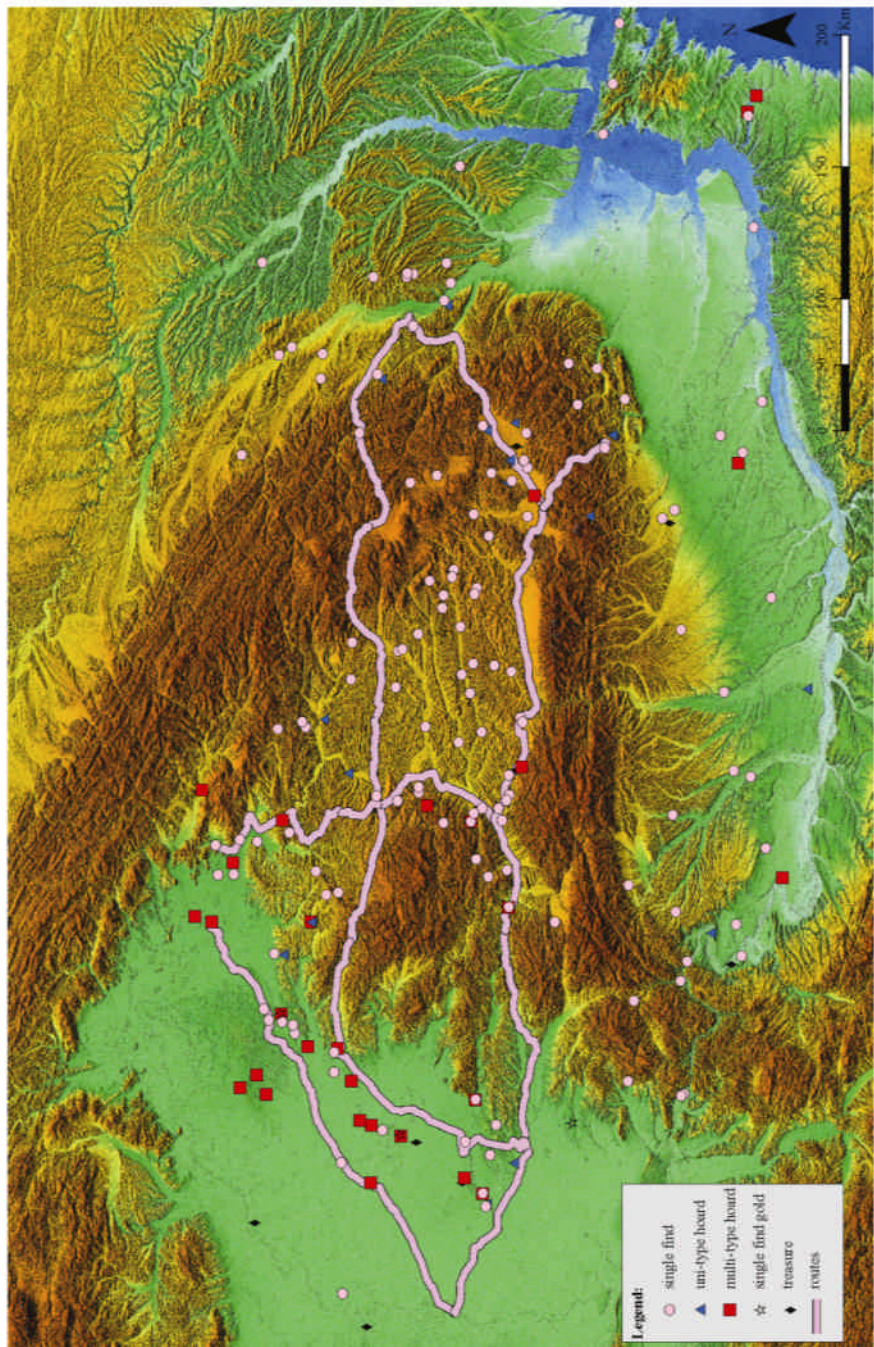
Map 1. The distribution of Early Bronze Age metal depositions.



Map 2. The distribution of Middle Bronze Age metal depositions.



Map 3. Middle Bronze Age types of objects found in depositions.



Map 4. Possible Middle Bronze Age routes.