

# ECOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC AND BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS OF THE CUCUTENI A4 COMMUNITY AT DRĂGUȘENI

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The settlement under discussion is situated in a geomorphologically distinct region of the Moldavian Plain (Fig. 1/1). It is the region extending from Botoșani-Dorohoi eastward almost to the Prut, and from Dorohoi-Darabani in the north to Botoșani-Săveni in the south. Its main peculiarity is the absence of orderly riverside terraces; the unevenly rolling country keeps rising to approximately 300 m and falling below 100 m (Fig. 1/2). Erosion, landslips, breaks of slopes (also caused by farming work), which geographers mentioned as early as the 19th century,<sup>1</sup> must have contributed to this scenery. Such processes were bound to occur on land which, except for a few coppices planted in modern times, is barren.

The only watercourses crossing the region are the Bașeu and its tributary, the Podriga. Both are lazy rivers, fed by few springs, and their valleys vary greatly in width.

The Cucuteni site lies in the valley of the Podriga, 7–8 km from its confluence with the Bașeu, in a place called Ostrov (=islet), which is less than 100 m high. In former times Ostrov was surrounded by the waters of the Podriga, which forked there, but nowadays a marshy tract of land, where walking is difficult, is all that has remained of the river's left arm.

Some 2 km upstream, on the hillock right of the Podriga, there is another site, În Deal la Lutărie (=clay-pit hill), contemporary with that of Ostrov<sup>2</sup>.

The investigated region falls in the area of leached chernozem soils, mostly formed on soft rocks (saliferous marls, clays, loess-like deposits, etc.).

The first relevant question is: To what an extent did the environment in the occupation period resemble the present one?

In contrast to the open steppe that arrests one's eye now (Fig. 2; 4/1), when they arrived the Cucuteni tribes found a forest-steppe with a probably not very dense tree cover. The forest consisted mainly of mixed oak, in which lime and elm predominated, whereas oak and hazel were extremely rare. This landscape was changed fairly rapidly by the Cucuteni people, whose activities affected mainly lime and elm, since they provided suitable building material for houses. Hazel, too, had disappeared towards the middle of the occupation period (Fig. 5).

A comparison of the profiles at Ostrov and În Deal la Lutărie (where the natural succession of pedogenetic horizons was intact) proved that the soil layer had been comparatively thin when the first Cucuteni tribe had settled there. The sediment belonging to the B horizon of leached chernozem seems to be contemporary with its arrival at Ostrov (Fig. 5).

The scarcity of forests in the exploitation territory of the excavated settlement may also be inferred from the very small number of wild mammal bones characteristic of this biotope. Only

<sup>1</sup> V. Băcăuanu, *Cîmpia Moldovei*, Bucharest, 1968, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> The settlement was discovered accidentally in the early sixties, while local people were digging for clay. Its systematic investigation began soon afterwards (cf. Dorin Popescu, SCIV, 16, 1965, 3, p. 591, idem, SCIV, 17, 1966, 4, p. 712). A. Crișmaru, the village schoolmaster, has the credit for the discovery of both sites: Ostrov and În Deal la Lutărie (cf. A. Crișmaru, SCIV, 21, 1970, 2, pp. 267–285), and for the collection, restoration, drawing and publication of all the chance findings made on the village precincts (see idem,

*Drăgușeni — contribuții la o monografie arheologică*, Bacău, 1977). Vladimir Dumitrescu conducted the excavations in 1970–1974, with S. Marinescu-Bîlcu on the team (see V. Dumitrescu, ZIA, 7, 1973, pp. 177–196, idem, *Din trecutul județului Botoșani*, Botoșani, 1974, pp. 33–47; idem, in *Festschrift für Richard Pittioni zum 70. Geburtstag*, Vienna, 1976, pp. 167–176). Work on the site was resumed in 1979 by the first two authors of this study (cf. S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, *Materiale*, Tulcea, 1980, pp. 100–102).

species whose life depends, in one way or another, on an arboreal environment have been included in this group: the squirrel and the forest marten, which build their nest in trees and have special morphological adaptations enabling them to move along and between tree trunks, the wild cat and the lynx, which jump down on their prey, etc. Other species that are often mentioned as forest indicators, such as the deer, wild boar, bear and aurochs, actually do not have ecological needs calling for this biotope. The forest is nothing but a favouring factor in the life of these species, which take shelter in it against weather outbursts and predators, among whom man ranks first.

As far as forest-specific species are concerned, only two marten bones, three lynx bones, and a few beaver bones have been found in the settlement to date.

On the other hand, the boar/deer ratio, based on the findings made so far, indicates a predominance of the former. This might mirror the situation in the valley of the Podriga, which probably did not flow more rapidly than today. The thickets and reeds growing on its banks offered both food and cover to boar populations, but were much less propitious to deer. Pollen analysis has confirmed this type of biotope in a period preceding the cultural layer.

As already mentioned, the Cucuteni people that settled at Ostrov doubtless interfered with the environment. They cut down lime and elm for timber and at the same time dug many pits to get clay for their houses.

The trench pattern and field observations suggest that Ostrov, which extends over more than 6 ha, was fully occupied by the Cucuteni tribe. However, only 12–17% of the settlement has been excavated by now, and another 30–35% has been destroyed in recent years (greenhouses, access roads, facilities of the vegetable garden, clay-pit) (Fig. 3).

By 1982, seventeen dwellings had been uncovered; fourteen were fully or almost fully excavated, and three were partly investigated. Moreover, 39 pits and shallow pits were wholly or partially excavated: most of them were clay-pits, subsequently used for refuse. A few were ritual pits dug prior to building the house and in which offerings had been laid (Fig. 4/5). This custom was taken over from the Precucuteni people<sup>3</sup> and carried on in the next phase (Cucuteni A–B), when it became general practice but was limited to the burying of a single foundation vessel.<sup>4</sup> In several instances natural hollows had been levelled or clay-pits had been filled in before construction work proper began. They provide clues to the progressive expansion of the settlement.

The area of the houses varied from 28–30 sq m to 50–60 sq m, and exceeded 100 sq m in only two instances (Fig. 4/2–4). One house had been entirely built on a platform, seven had had partial platforms, and the remaining had been erected on wood or clay runners. As a rule, wall posts were 8–13 cm thick, whereas platform beams were over 18–25 cm in diameter (Fig. 4/6). Hearths (in various states of preservation) were found in many houses; they lay directly on the floor, some had been reconstructed, and most of them had no firescreen (Fig. 4/7).

The building system was described elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> but it should be stressed that the pollen diagram (Fig. 5) has established that the houses had a thatch roof (as they had at Tirpești<sup>6</sup>). *Tyfa* exceeds 25% in the cultural layer, which proves that it was brought in big amounts and used for thatching. Similar figures were provided by the pollen diagram from În Deal la Lutărie (Fig. 6), where only pits and vestiges of hearths were discovered and where the potters of Ostrov probably made the ware for the households in their settlement and for an intense barter. All this suggests that at În Deal la Lutărie *Tyfa* may have been employed as fuel, together with other materials.

To gain information on pottery, clay samples were collected from both sites and examined by X-ray diffraction. So were potsherds of all types of ware. According to the first results, the clay samples have the same mineralogical composition, which means that the pottery may have been made of clay from any of the two deposits. Firing proceeded at the oxidizing temperature of about 800°C. Only the so-called C ware stands apart in terms of technology (firing at reducing temperatures of circa 650–700°C) and of mineralogical composition of the paste, which points to another clay source<sup>7</sup>.

The cultural layer has yielded 1,278 stone tools and 6,152 splinters without any trace of wear. All the splinters and 1,114 tools are of flint. The latter include simple and double-end scrapers, plain and retouched blades, arrow- and spear-heads, burins, racloirs, a sickle blade (Fig.

<sup>3</sup> S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, *Cultura Precucuteni pe teritoriul României*, Bucharest, 1974, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> H. and V. Dumitrescu, *Materiale*, 5, 1959, p. 173. This ritual practice is also known at Berești and Trușești in the Cucuteni A phase (see S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, *SCIV*, 19, 1968, 3, p. 403, Note 13).

<sup>5</sup> S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–37.

<sup>6</sup> S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, M. Cărciumaru, A. Muraru, *Dacia*, N.S., 25, 1981, pp. 7–31.

<sup>7</sup> Carmen Colțoș, Gh. Niculescu, *Cercetări de conservare și restaurare*, 1, 1981, pp. 201–203.

7/1—5) and many splinters that display retouch or traces of wear. The colour range of flint is very wide: milky white, greyish-white, yellowish, greyish-brown, black. Gradation of colour is visible from one tool to another and sometimes on one and the same specimen. Many spots of various colours, due to defects in rock structure, occur on most tools.

Mild desilicification has been noticed on some worked pieces, especially on sharp edges but also on flat surfaces. This alteration, often regarded as patina, is actually due to the environment in which the affected specimen was preserved; it occurs when the pH of the deposit turns alkaline and silica may be leached. The fact that 58% of the alluvial-colluvial soils on the site are alkaline and 42% neutral accounts for it.

An examination of geological maps in search of the possible sources of flint has shown that the nearest deposits are those of Buglovia age outcropping on the bank of the Prut between Rădăuți and Liveni.<sup>8</sup> All the macroscopic characters of the samples from Drăguseni correspond to those deposits. The distance from Drăguseni to the Prut is only 15–20 km and that is why flint tools account for 87.16% of all stone implements (Fig. 8/1).

The second rock is chert, of which 127 tools were made. Its properties — it is compact and contains over 90% silica — recommended it for axes, of various forms and dimensions, and small chisels (Fig. 7/6—14). Like flint, chert displays gradual transitions in colour, granulation etc. According to geological information it comes from the Palaeogenic flysch bordering the Eastern Carpathians in the east<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 8/1). It may have been obtained directly or by barter from the valleys of the Moldova and the Suceava, that is from some 120–150 km.

Hence, despite the closeness of flint and its superior toughness, chert was brought from much greater distances with a view to making axes and chisels. This was due to the difficulty which the polishing of flint entailed and to the fact that chert was a fairly adequate material for those tools and still irreplaceable at the time.

A finding hitherto unreported from any Chalcolithic site is worth mentioning: traces of red paint, rich in iron oxides, were detected on two chert axes — actually the finest from this settlement (Fig. 7/7, 13). The two specimens may have had a special use, still evading definition.

Thirty-four tools are made of three types of sandstone: siliceous (four), calcareous (twenty-eight), and glauconitic (two). Grain size and clastic material vary, but silica predominates in all types and renders them very hard. Due to its abrasive properties, this rock was used in particular for querns; however, axes were also made of sandstone with a finer texture. The mineralogical composition of the classic material points to a common origin and to formation in the same sedimentation basin, but at different times and in different layers. This association of sandstones may be readily traced to the Upper Cretaceous (Cenomanian) formations outcropping on the bank of the Prut<sup>10</sup>.

Two artefacts are made of quartzite, a mesozone metamorphic rock containing over 98% silicon dioxide recrystallized from preexisting silica-rich rocks, which renders it extremely hard. It has a granuloblastic structure and is milky white in colour.<sup>11</sup> The origin of the rock is not very clear because no clues are available. Possible sources are the crystalline zone of the Eastern Carpathians or the valleys crossing it, i.e. of the rivers Moldova and Bistrița (Fig. 8/1).<sup>12</sup> One of these tools, which is disk-shaped and carefully polished on a perfectly flat side, was used as a pestle for grinding very fine powder. An iron oxide-rich crust, resulting from the preparation of red paint, has persisted on its surface and even penetrated fine fissures. This second artefact is a fragment of perforated axe.

Another specimen that deserves notice is made of greyish-brown limestone with a slight microstratification and detritic inclusions (quartz, feldspar). Like the sandstones, it comes from local formations.

An analysis of the stone tools from several Cucuteni settlements dated to different stages of this culture has shown that the flint-chert-sandstone is always present. Due to their properties the three rocks complement one another in terms of functionality: flint has a conchoidal fracture, chert is hard yet easily worked, and sandstone is abrasive. The incidence ratio of the three rocks differs from one site to another. At this stage of research the difference is attributed to the distance from the sources of raw materials, on the one hand, and to specific economic activities of the communities, on the other. The former determines, to a certain extent, the flint/

<sup>8</sup> C. N. Albu, C. Gheorghiu, I. Popescu, *Comunicări de geologie-geografie*, 1957–1959, Bucharest, 1960, pp. 9–23.

<sup>9</sup> V. Mutihac, L. Ionesi, *Geologia României*, Bucharest, 1974, pp. 266–302.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 147–149.

<sup>11</sup> I. Treiber, *Petrografia rocilor eruptive și metamorfice*, Bucharest, 1963, p. 312.

<sup>12</sup> V. Mutihac, L. Ionesi, *op. cit.*, pp. 168–182.

chert tool ratio. For example, this ratio is 8.77 at Drăgusești, which is close to the flint source, and only 0.55 in the Cucuteni A level at Tîrpești<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 8/2).

An influence of economic activities on the preferential use of one rock or another is suggested by the results of analyses from settlements situated in a small area, therefore having the same possibilities of supply, but where the ratios of the three major types of rock, i.e. flint, chert, and sandstone, vary.

A petrographic category including various rocks (magmatic, metamorphic and/or sedimentary) and accounting for less than 2–3% of the implements never fails to occur on every site. Though quantitatively non-significant, these rocks do matter because they were used for perforated axes and maces.

The comparatively large number of spear- and arrow-heads which turned up during the excavations (Fig. 7/1–2) correlates with the hunting activities of the community under study. However, the bear, wolf, fox, lynx, marten, beaver, and, to all appearance, the bison were occasional preys, for each of these species is represented by a few isolated bones. This seems to apply to the horse too (five or six bones). Only the deer, aurochs and wild boar were hunted more or less systematically for economic purposes, mainly for food. Even in their case, however, hunting was not a regular and rigorously organised activity, because males, females and still growing young animals were indiscriminately killed.

Doubtless, deer antler belonged to the raw materials sought after in the community for the manufacture of implements. Indeed, the number of antler fragments is equal to or even larger than that of bones and, what is more, all fragments, regardless of size, were deliberately cut and many display also marks of use. Among the few pieces that include the base, there are pediculate and cast antlers<sup>14</sup>. Hence this raw material was obtained by gathering and by hunting.

One cannot tell whether the potential resources of the Podriga were exploited for food. There is no evidence, osteological or cultural, of fishing. A few shells were found, but they were spread all over the site, never concentrated in a dwelling, pit, etc. A bone of *Cygnus sp.* was also discovered<sup>15</sup>.

Since excavations will continue, no figures will be produced — they are preliminary anyway — but some economic features likely to be confirmed will be pointed out.

Some 40% of the meat eaten by the community came from bovids (cattle + aurochs) and another approx. 40% from suids (swine + wild bear).

As far as may be seen from the still scanty measurements, the cattle had a fairly robust skeleton, capable of supporting a comparatively large mass of meat (Mc. proximal breadth = 57–69 mm, M = 62.25, n = 10; distal breadth = 58.5–73 mm, M = 63.5, n = 14. Mt. proximal breadth = 44.5–56 mm, M = 49.85, n = 13, distal breadth = 47.7–62 mm, M = 55.34, n = 13).

The majority of the adult cattle population (over two-and-a-half years) seems to have consisted of cows. This suggests the following bovine industry pattern: only a small number of all the males born was kept for reproduction; of the young animals aged between 6 months and 2 years, males were the prime target of slaughter; the "herd" of the community was made up mainly of females kept up to 4 years and over.

Three distal metapodes of adult cattle have a very wide, almost fan-like, extremity (Fig. 11/17). They resemble a Neolithic specimen from Fekirtepe, Anatolia; this shape is said to occur in old oxen used as draught animals, or as a malformation<sup>16</sup>. The first alternative seems more probable.

In the suid group, about 25% of the bones belonged to wild representatives and some 50% are remains of animals below 1 year. The inexistence of objective criteria of determining the latter and the fragmentation of the specimens make it practically impossible to estimate how many come from the wild population and how many from the domestic one. On the other hand, assigning all remains to the domestic group is theoretically unjustified and methodologically incorrect.

Both the amount of bones and the number of individuals they represent suggest that caprovines played a minor role in the life of the community. Goats exceed sheep in number. The sheep were slender and small (51–58 cm); the goats were much taller and more strongly built. More than half of the caprovines were kept up to 2 or even 3–4 years, that is for much of their

<sup>13</sup> S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, M. Cărciumaru, A. Muraru, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> When the first bone report on the 1970–1972 sample was published, the antler fragments included no proximal ends. See A. Bolomey, *Materiale*, Tulcea, 1980, pp. 103–106.

<sup>15</sup> Determined by Dr. Eugen Kessler of Oradea, to whom

thanks are expressed here too.

<sup>16</sup> J. Boessneck and Angela von den Driesch, *Die Tierknochenfunde aus der Neolithischen Siedlung auf dem Tikirtepe, bei Kadiköy, am Marmarameer*, Munich, 1979, p. 14 and Plate 2, Fig. 3b.

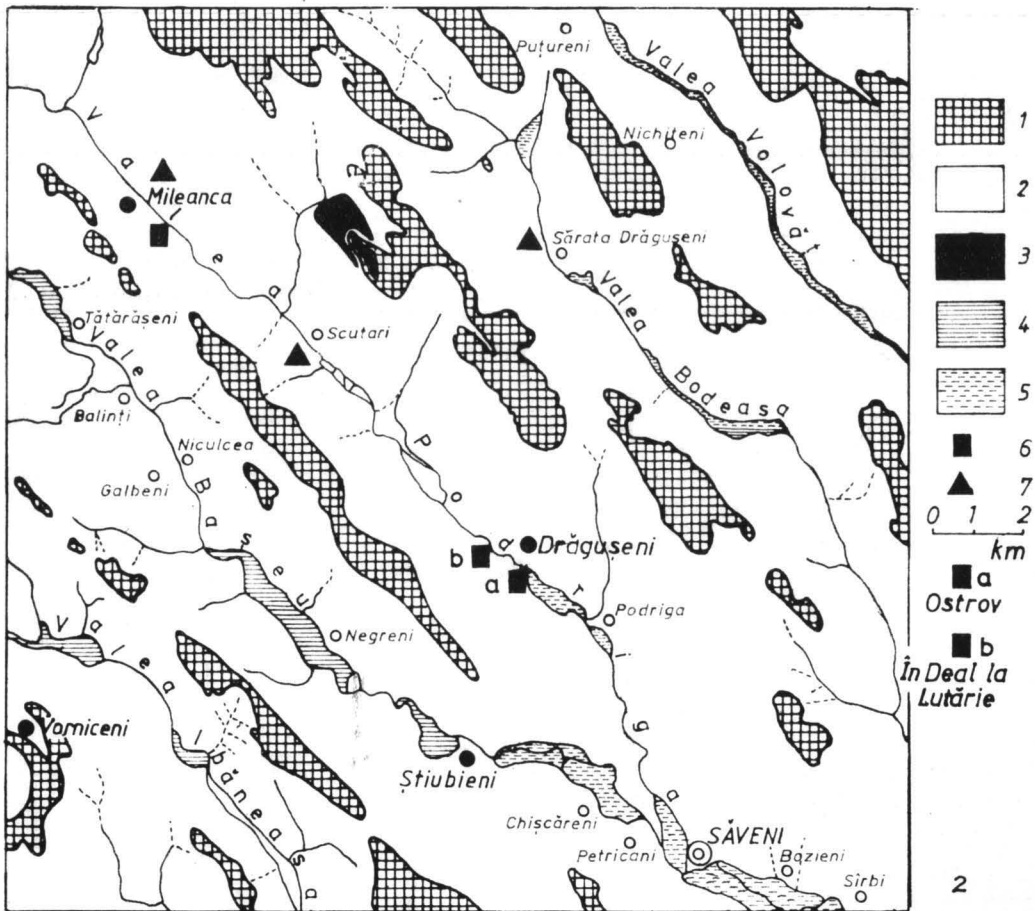
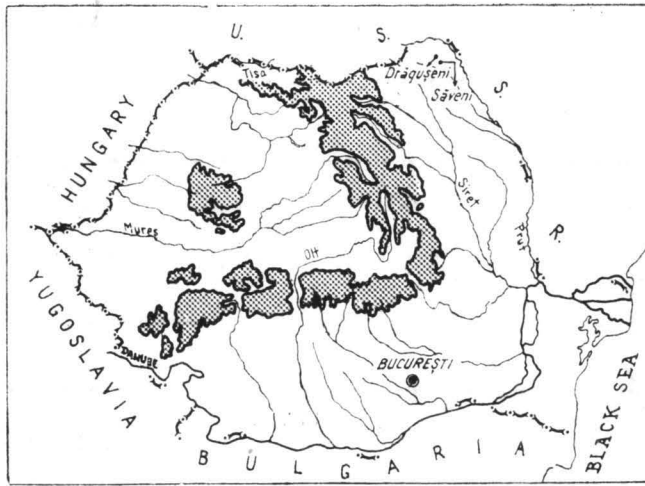



Fig. 1. — 1, Map of Romania; 2, Rough geomorphological map of the investigated area.  
 1 Heights over 200 m, 2 Heights below 200 m, 3 Afforested areas, 4 Ponds, 5 Marshy area, 6 Cucuteni A sites, 7 Cucuteni A-B sites.

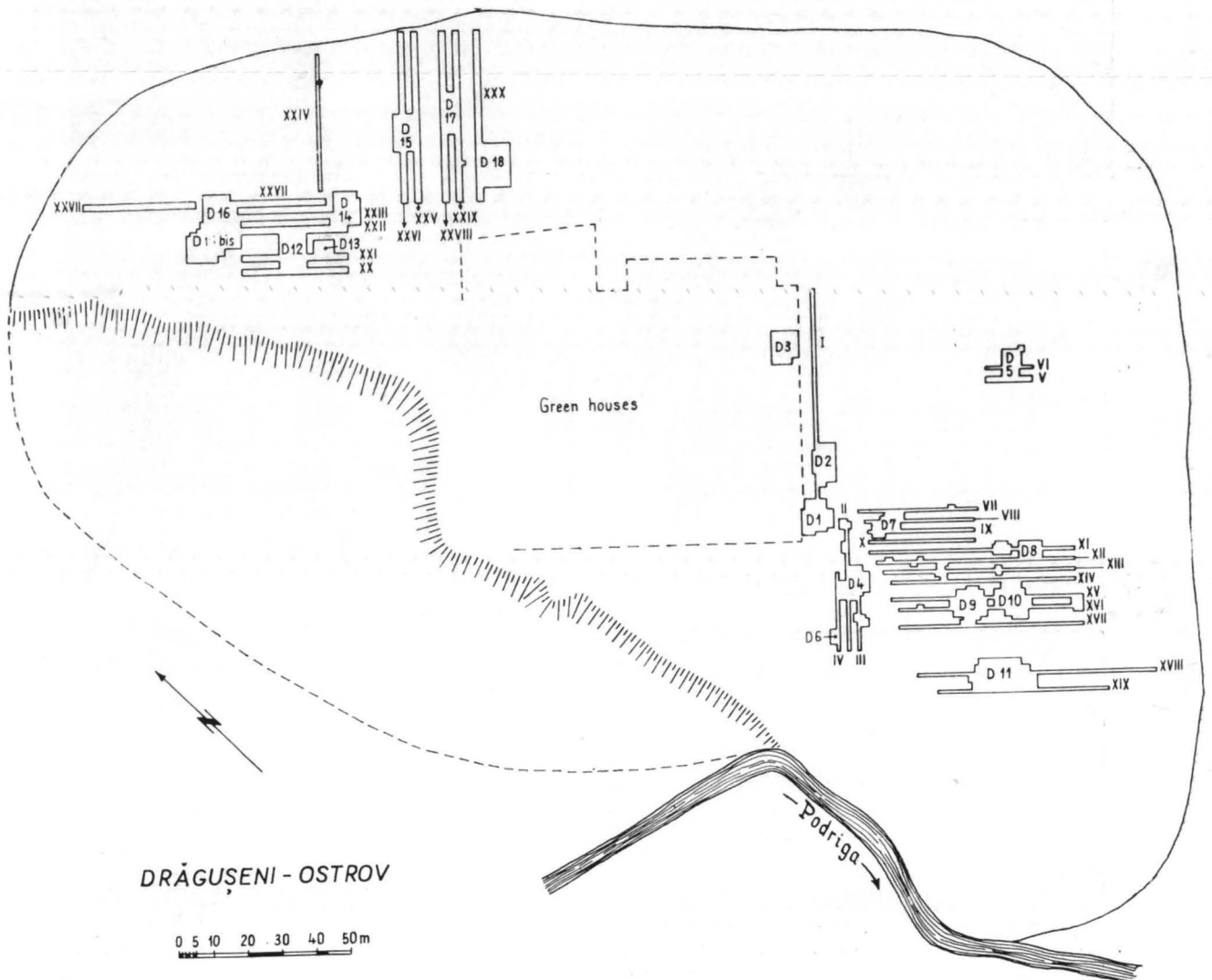
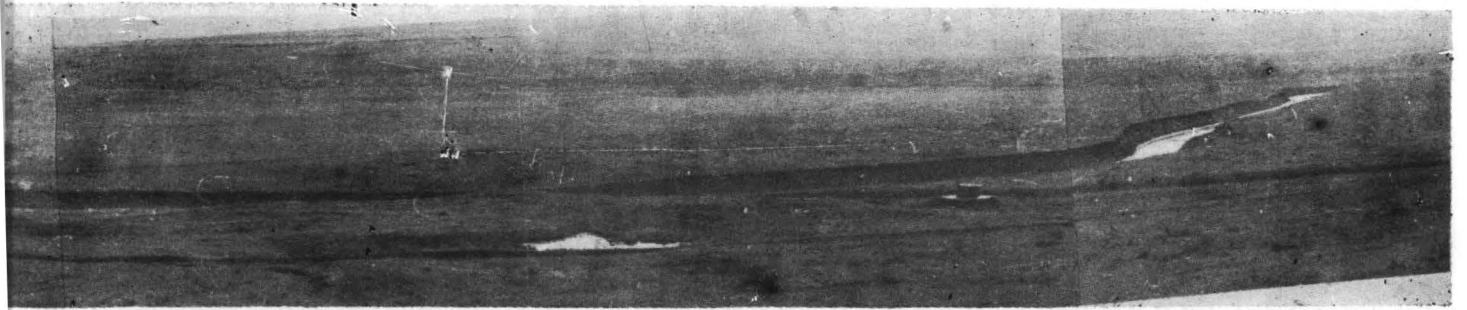
*OSTROV*



Fig. 2. — General view of the Podriga Valley in the Ostrov — În Deal la Lutărie area.

Fig. 3. — Plan of Ostrov with the excavated trenches (I — XX) and dwellings (D.1 — 18). 

DEAL LA LUTĂRIE



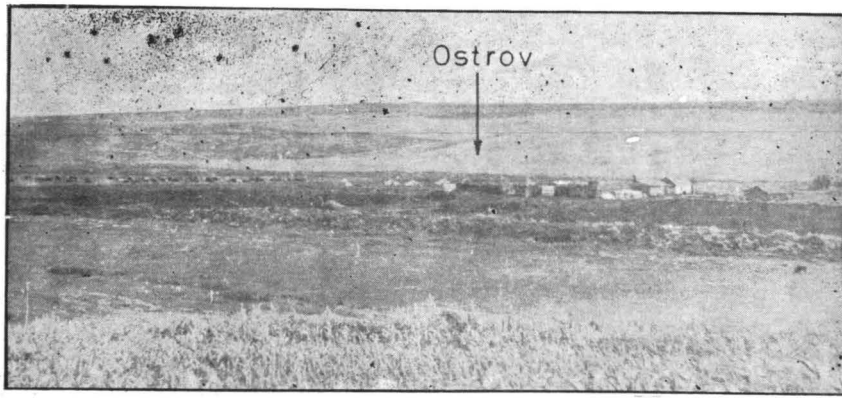
DRĂGUȘENI - OSTROV

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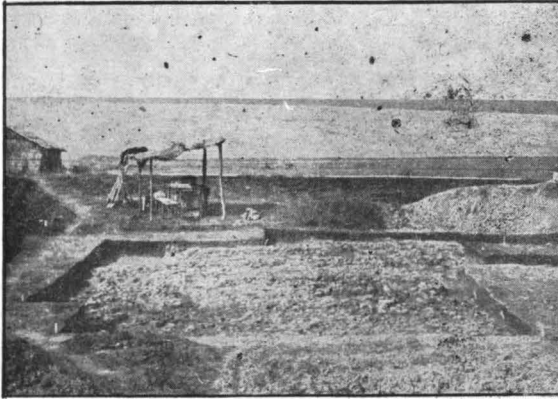
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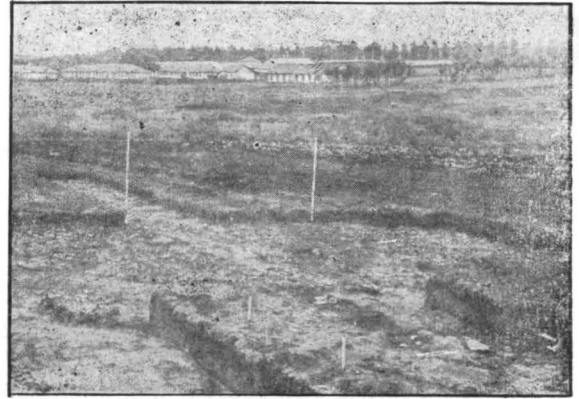




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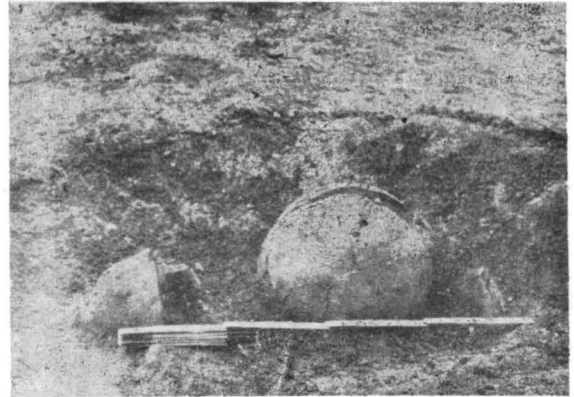
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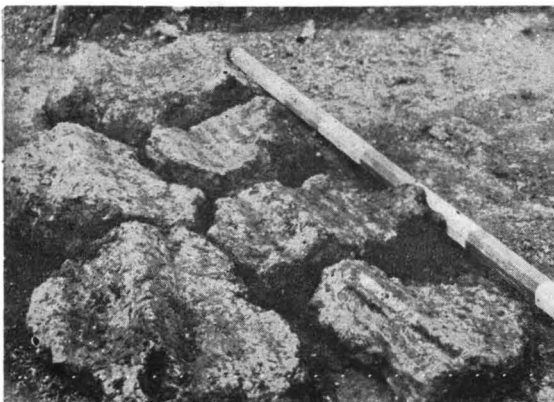
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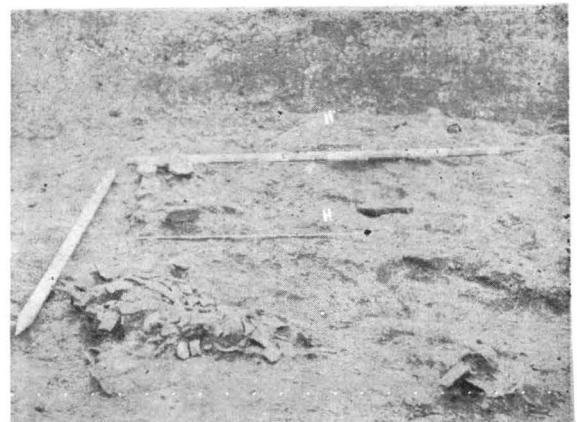
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5



6



7

Fig. 4. — 1, General view of Ostrov ; 2—4, Excavating the vestiges of the various buildings ; 5, Foundation deposit ; 6, Imprints of beams of a house platform ; 7, Vestiges of a hearth with broken vessels around it.



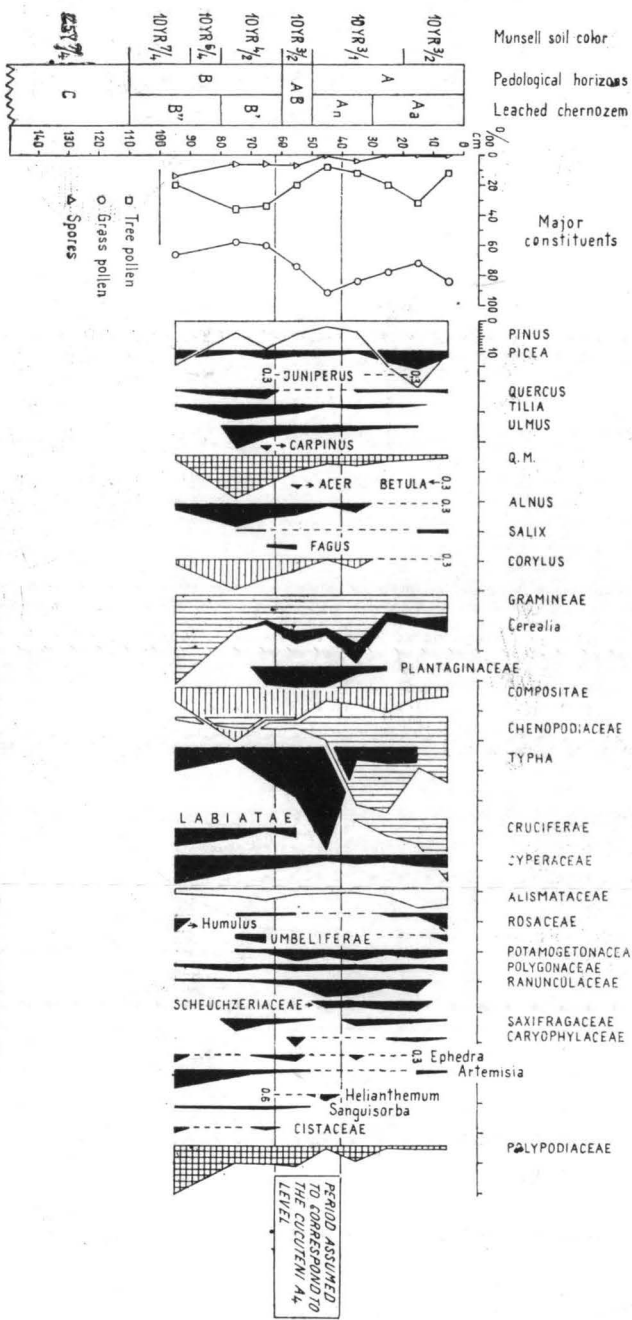
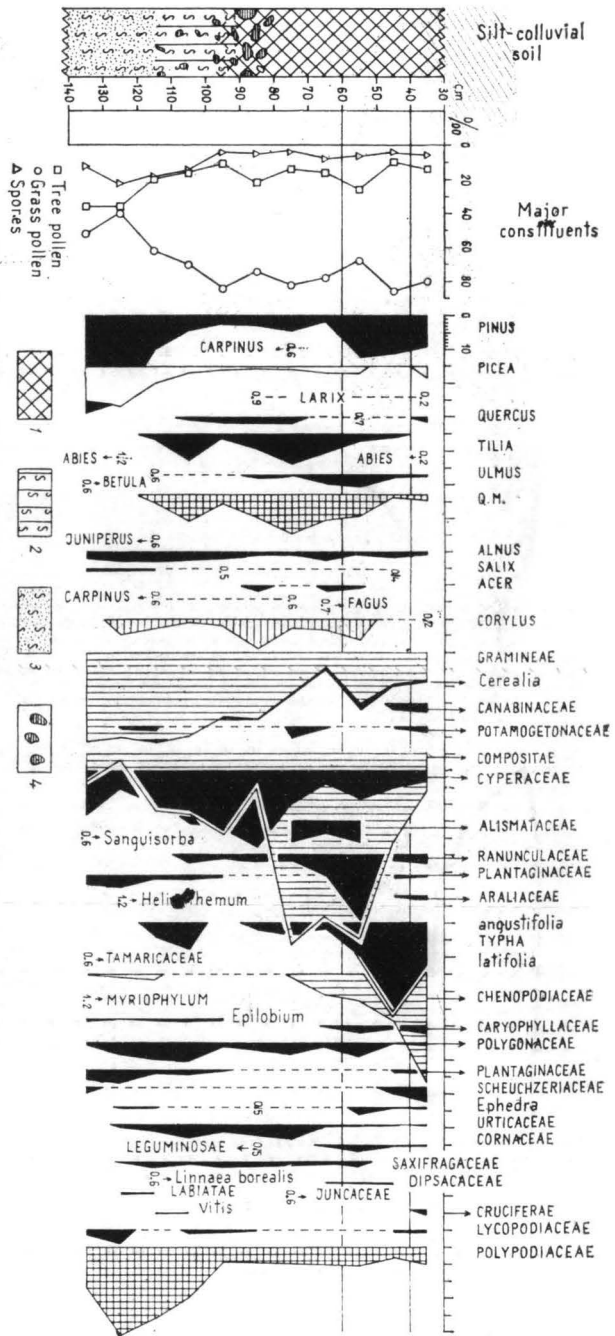


Fig. 6. Pollen diagram of the soil at In Deal la Luta

1 Soil with loess dolls at bottom, 2 Weathered loess with many crotyines and carbonate accumulations, 3 Yellowish loess growing more sandy towards the bottom and containing carbonate accumulations especially in the upper part, where crotyines can also be seen, 4 Carbonate accumulations.

Fig. 5. — Pollen diagram of the sediment of the Cucuteni A4 settlement at Ostrov.



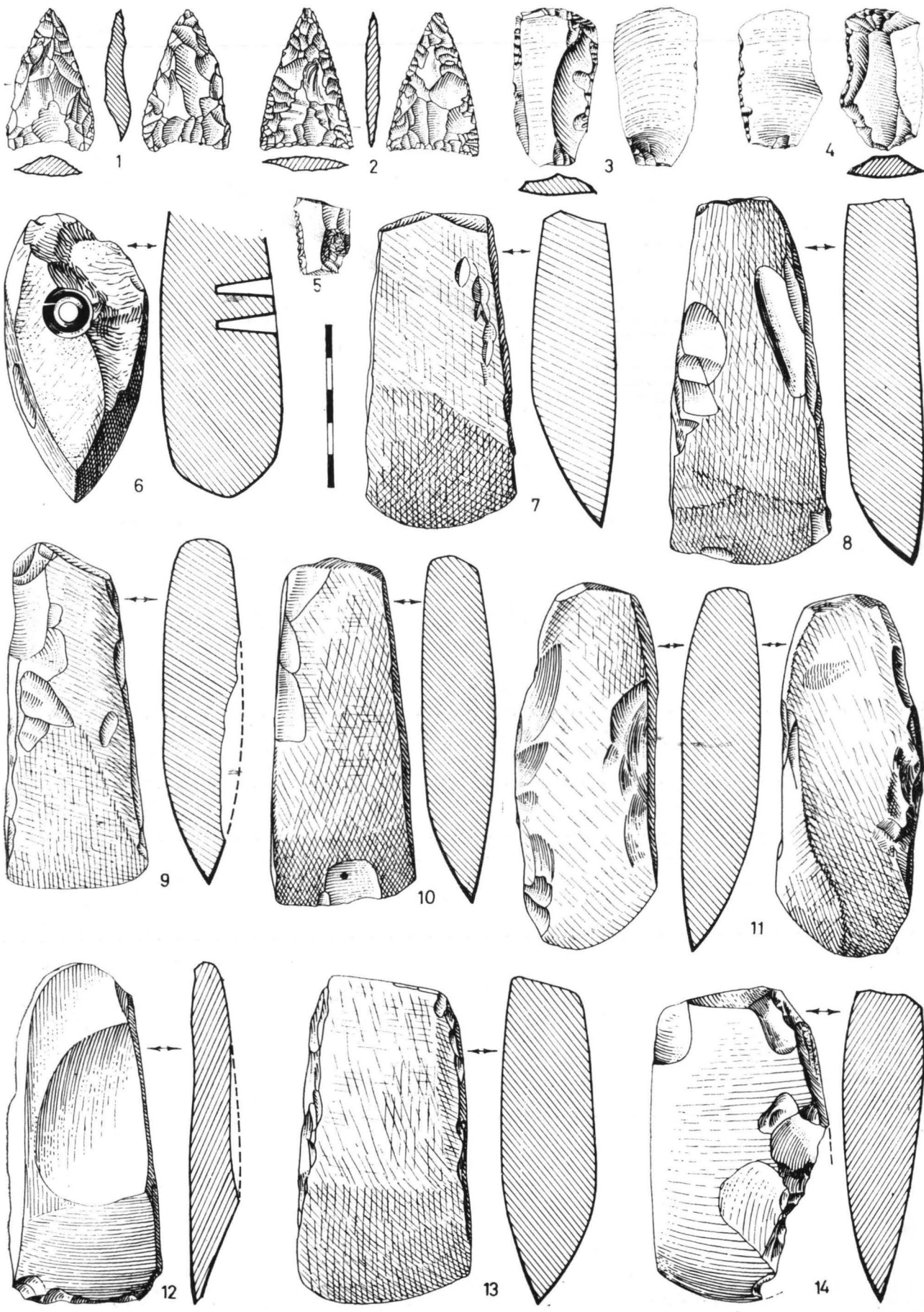
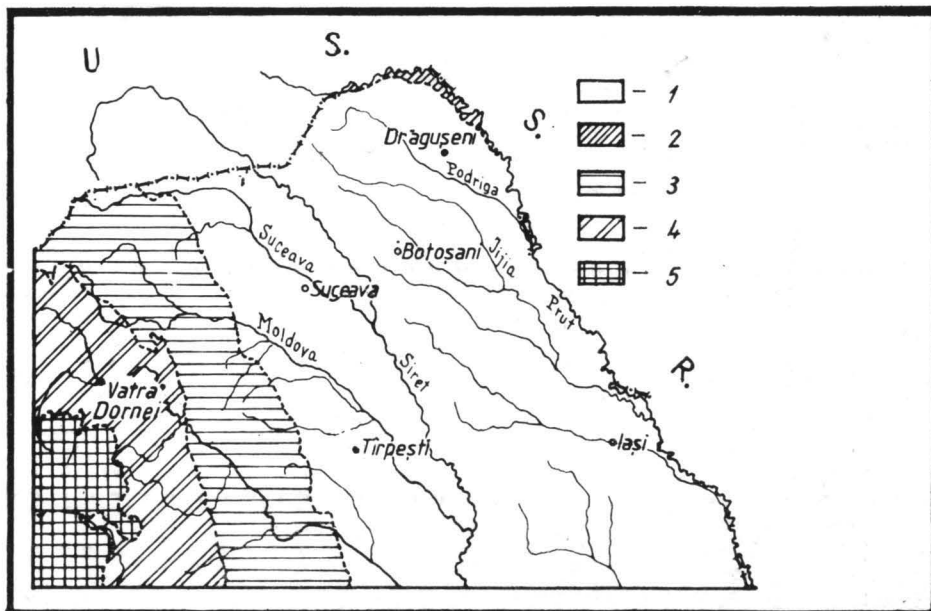
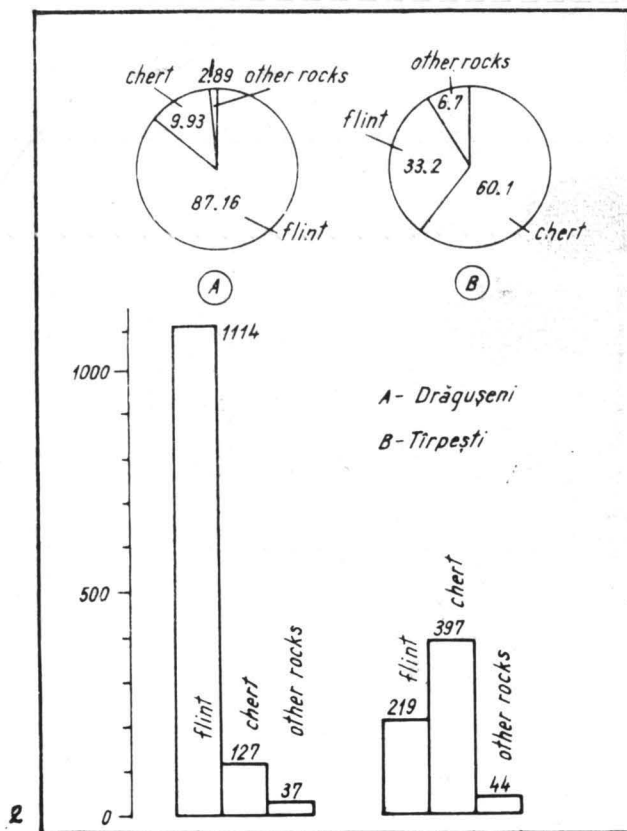


Fig. 7. — Tools discovered at Ostrov.

1—5, Flint; 6—14, Chert (7 and 13 bear traces of red paint on both sides).



1



2

Fig. 8. — 1, Geological map of the sources of raw material for the stone tools of Drăguseni  
 1 Plateau, 2 Plateau deposits (flint, sandstone), 3, Flysch zone (chert), 4 Crystalline zone (quartzite), 5 Volcanic zone; 2, Major rock types: comparison between Drăguseni and Tirpești (top: percentages; bottom: number of tools).

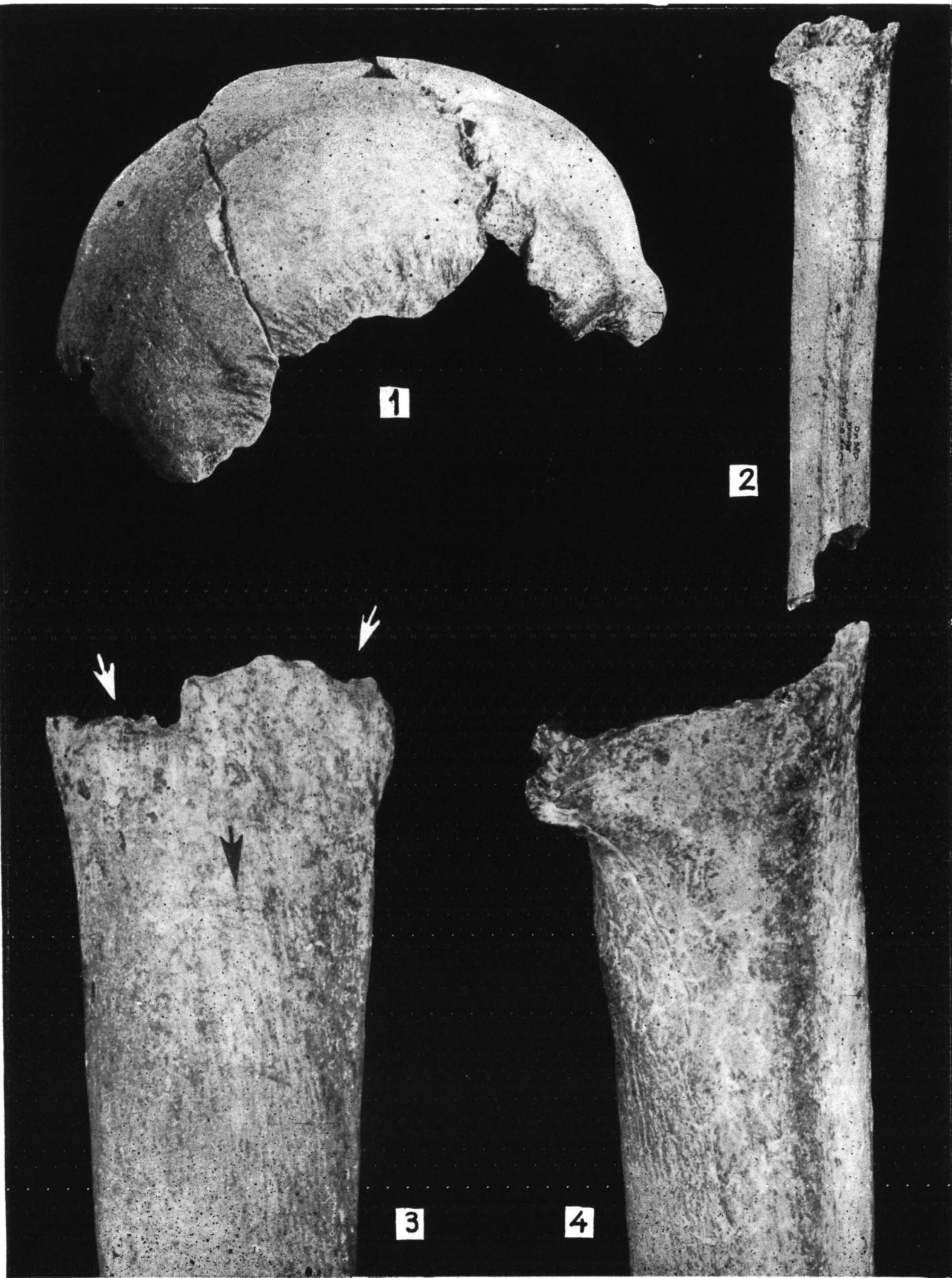


Fig. 9. — Human bones.

1, Skull fragment, lateral view; 2, Femur shaft, posterior view; 3-4, Details of the proximal end of the femur shaft; the arrows indicate the gnawing marks and incisions on the anterior face.





Fig. 10. — Ostrov : Cucuteni A4 pottery.

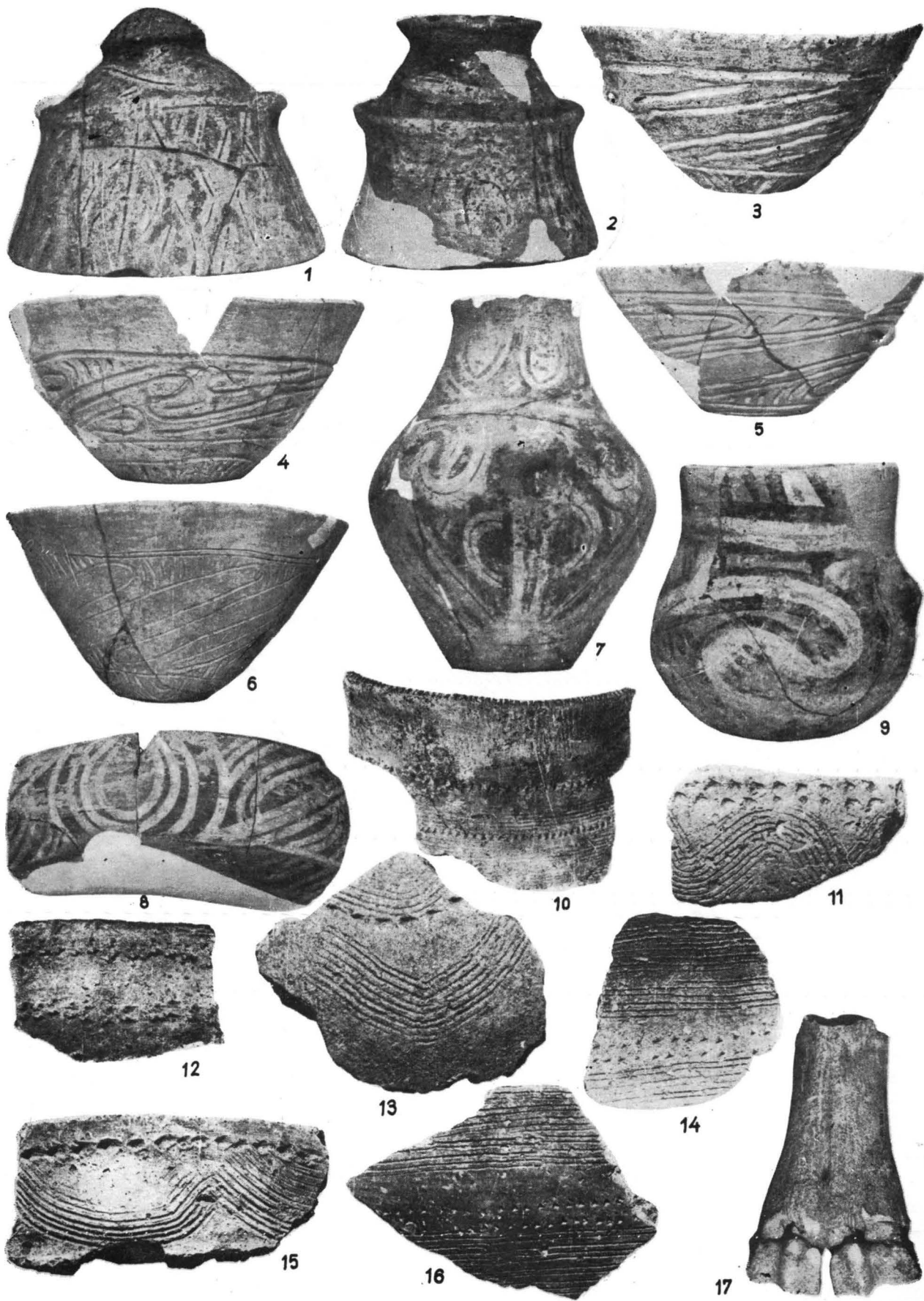


Fig. 11. — Ware from Ostrov.  
 1–9, Typical Cucuteni A4 specimens; 10–16, “Cucuteni C” type; 17, Cattle distal metacarpal.



1



2



3

4-5



a

6



b



7-8

9



Fig. 12. — Ostrov; 1-2, View of the excavation; 3-9, Cucuteni A4 ware.





economic life. Whether this was done exclusively with a view to reproduction or solely in order to use their products (milk, hair, wool) for a longer time, or for both purposes alike, it indicates that caprovines were reared primarily for other economic benefits than meat.

The excavation of the multilevel settlement at Tirpești definitely proved that the community which occupied the site in the Cucuteni A2 phase was more numerous than the Precucuteni II and III communities: on equal areas, there were more dwellings, the number of tools was almost two-fold, the defensive ditch was longer and deeper in the first-mentioned phase. The amount of animal bones, however, is inversely proportional to this growth. The animal species are the same, their relative frequency is almost the same, but their quantity is highly different: 4,320 bones from at least 305 individuals (including 150 cattle) in the earlier level, and only 1,505 bones from 121 individuals (including 52 cattle) in the Cucuteni level.<sup>17</sup> In fact, a big quantity of bones is characteristic of all Precucuteni settlements throughout the area of that culture. It is quite obvious that, by comparison, the Cucuteni people depended on vegetable foods more than their predecessors. A preliminary estimate of the amount of meat supplied by the individuals identified at Drăgușeni produced small figures compared to the possible size of the community.<sup>18</sup>

The wide range of stone tools noticed in the Cucuteni A2 level at Tirpești may be connected, at least partly, with an improvement in farming efficiency. On the other hand, if the morphology of the bovine metapodes from Drăgușeni is actually the result of the animals' use for drawing tilling implements, it offers yet another explanation of the increase in agricultural productivity during phase A of the Cucuteni culture.

Though plant resources are supposed to have supplied much of the food at Drăgușeni, species of *Leguminosae*, *Cruciferae* and other families that were identified in practically contemporary settlements, such as Tirpești,<sup>19</sup> were not found.

According to pollen analysis grain crops were not grown in the settlement or its close vicinity (the floodplain of the Podriga), for cereal percentages range from only 0.4 to 1.5 (Fig. 5). Even În Deal la Lutărie which, as mentioned before, was used for making pottery, not for living, yielded more cereals — up to 3.4% (Fig. 6). By comparison, in the Cucuteni A layer of Tirpești the corresponding figures were 7–12.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it may be assumed that the crop fields of the Drăgușeni community were in some still unidentified area.

In relation to land-tilling, the absence of antler hoes was surprising though not conclusive, for they were extremely rare at Tirpești too. After all, wood sticks or even polished stone axes might have served the same purpose. Then, the 1982 digging season produced a hoe fragment and a ploughing implement made of an antler base whose pedicel is shaped into a spur.

Access to cereals is also supported by the presence, in the dwellings at Ostrov, of querns, sickle components, straw and chaff in the adobe, and various grain imprints of *Triticum cf. dicocum* and supposed *Hordeum sp.*

The latest digging seasons have supplied more information on the life of the Ostrov community.

First, constructions were grouped by two or three at close range (2–4 m), separated by 10–15 m of empty space from the next cluster (Fig. 3). The bones of a rarer animal species (a roe-deer) indicate that the prey was shared by the users to two houses of such a group, or that the two buildings were used by the same occupants.

Second, the users of certain buildings had a preference for specialized work. For example, dwelling No. 16 contained many deer antlers in various stages of working, a heap of flint chips, many of which could be reattached to the cores from which they had been split off, lay in a corner of dwelling No. 16 bis, and 14 chert axes in different manufacturing stages were found in dwelling No. 14.

Third, five independent human bones were discovered. Their fragmentary state cannot contribute towards a better knowledge of the morphological features of the Cucuteni-Tripolye human population. Their importance derives from the fact that they were found in uncommon locations: a refuse pit (the tibia of a teen-aged female), the débris of a house (the pelvis of an adult woman), near a dwelling but outside the mass of adobe (a mandible fragment of a young woman

<sup>17</sup> O. Necrasov and M. Știrbu, in S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, *Tirpești. From Prehistory to History in Eastern Romania*, BAR, 107, Oxford, 1981, pp. 182–183, Tables 1 and 2.

<sup>18</sup> An estimate on the sample supplied by the 1970–1972 digging seasons: 5,932 kg meat (from 64 MNI, 790 specimens) (Al. Bolomey, *op. cit.*, Fig. 1). Although the sample

has considerably increased since excavation was resumed, the relative frequency of species and/or groups of species has remained almost unchanged.

<sup>19</sup> S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, M. Cărciumaru, A. Muraru, *loc. cit.*, Fig. 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem.*

and a skull fragment of an 18–25-year-old man), and between two clusters of buildings (a femur shaft of an adult male)<sup>21</sup> (Fig. 9).

Such isolated specimens are also known from earlier discoveries in the area of the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture (Luka Vrubletskaya, Frumușica, Veremye, Kolodistoe, Kolomishchina I, Pavoloch, Birnova, the former County Bălți, Girov?). In search for an explanation the hypothesis has been put forward that their scattering over the settlements had a ritual significance<sup>22</sup>. While this hypothesis may not be unfounded, the findings of Drăgușeni-Ostrov are far from supporting it as a general practice of the communities concerned; on the contrary, they reveal new behavioural aspects: ritual scattering cannot be supposed to involve throwing into a refuse pit or leaving these “objects” with presumably magic powers a prey to dogs, as the marks of claws and teeth on two specimens indicate. Moreover, a bone bears also deliberately made incisions, which raise the question of anthropophagy (Fig. 9/3–4).

On the basis of pottery typology, years ago Professor Vladimir Dumitrescu placed Drăgușeni in the area where the Cucuteni culture developed into a local stage: A4<sup>23</sup>. At present this area is well outlined on both banks of the Prut; it extends beyond the Dniester in the east<sup>24</sup>, but stops before the Siret in the west. The communities living there were not severed from the other communities of the widespread Ariușd-Cucuteni-Tripolye complex, as confirmed by identical types of pottery from sites separated by hundreds of kilometres. One such type is the sparsely band-decorated ware, painted white between the motifs, which is rather rare at Drăgușeni, but well represented at Izvoare, Frumușica, Ariușd, Tirpești, etc.

Another Cucuteni A4 settlement was recently discovered in the valley of the Podriga, at Dealul Sirbi, which is 8–10 km upstream from Ostrov, within the boundaries of the commune of Mileanca<sup>25</sup>. The distance separating the two sites suggests that they were synchronous, if one admits that the radius of a settlement's exploitation territory did not exceed 4–5 km<sup>26</sup>.

Moreover, two Cucuteni A–B sites were identified in the valley: both are separated by 4–5 km from the afore-mentioned settlements. They are Scutari, on the border of the exploitation territory of the two Cucuteni A4 settlements, and La Țarină (commune of Mileanca), 4–5 km from Dealul Sirbi<sup>27</sup> (Fig. 1/2).

We may assume that the Cucuteni community of Ostrov left at the time of the transition to phase A–B (Fig. 11/8, 17) and went on living at Scutari, while the people of Dealul Sirbi moved to La Țarină. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that culturally and stylistically, and hence chronologically too, the settlement of Scutari may be placed between the stages represented at Ostrov and Corlăteni. As is known the latter site belongs to the Cucuteni A–B1 phase.

For example, the ware from Scutari<sup>28</sup> has forms and designs inherited from Cucuteni A4 but treated in the new stylistic manner, specifically, fluting, incision and deeply cut decoration were no longer used. This material proves not only the natural linear evolution from the Cucuteni A4 stage to the Cucuteni A–B phase, but also that the area in which the new phase formed and crystallized includes the territory of Moldova and the Moldavian S.S.R. The sites between the Dniester and the Bug represent only expansions (as they do in the case of the Precucuteni II–III – Tripolye A1–A2 culture); the primary settlements should be placed in the adjacent regions west and east of the Prut.

Far from providing a full picture of a community that lived in the middle of the fourth millennium B.C. (Bln 1060 : 3405 ± 100 B.C.), these data have only served to reconstruct some traits of its material life.

<sup>21</sup> Al. Bolomey, *Cercetări arheologice*, 6, 1982, pp. 159–173.

<sup>22</sup> For the opinions of Soviet archaeologists see T.G. Moshka, *MIA Kisinev*, 1960, pp. 59–76.

<sup>23</sup> Vl. Dumitrescu, see Note 2.

<sup>24</sup> The pottery from one of the levels at Zhura, Nezvisko, Polivanov-Yar, Novyi Russeshti, Duruitoarea Nouă and other sites finds its best analogues at Drăgușeni-Ostrov (see E. Cernys in *Eneolit S.S.S.R.*, Moscow, 1982, pp. 166–320, Fig. 11/7–8; colour plate between pp. 224 and 225, vessels 1, 2, and 4). And there are many more examples. The point to be made, however, is that most of the ware from these sites (to be found mainly at the Ermitage in Leningrad) is identical with the pottery discovered at Drăgușeni. In fact,

the latter has been illustrated in this study more richly than usual (Fig. 10; 11/1–16) in order to demonstrate that some archaeologists are mistaken in their typological and chronological classification of this site.

<sup>25</sup> C. Crișmaru, Hierasus, Botoșani, 1980, pp. 97–120.

<sup>26</sup> C. Vita-Finzi and E. Higgs, *PPS*, 36, 1970, pp. 1–37, E.S. Higgs and C. Vita-Finzi, in *Papers in Economic Prehistory* (ed. E.S. Higgs), Cambridge, 1972, pp. 27–36, *Palaeo-economy* (ed. E.S. Higgs), Cambridge, 1975, pp. 223–224.

<sup>27</sup> A. Crișmaru, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*. If similar sites are discovered on both sides of the Prut, they will possibly represent a Cucuteni A–B<sub>1a</sub> stage.