

CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE SYNCHRONISM OF THE CERNAVODA I CULTURE

DRAGOMIR POPOVICI, PUIU HAȘOTTI

Because of the special importance for the knowing of the late eneolithic period from the south-east of Romania, the archaeological excavations from the Hirșova tell were started again in 1985.¹

During the 1985—1988 campaigns, there were found remains of dwellings that might be dated in the 16—17, 9—11, 4—6 centuries, in the First Iron Age and in the Cernavoda I culture².

Until now, the most consistent stratum belongs to the Cernavoda I culture. Here, the stratigraphic and typological observations allowed us to notice the existence of two levels of living³.

The lower level, marked by surface dwellings, shows between the depths of 1,10/1,20—1,30/1,40 m, according to the configuration of the land. It is thus quite narrow.

Under the dwelling level it appeared a levelled stratum of yellow sandy clay in which many traces of inhabitation like pottery fragments, fragments of adobe, bones and tools or fragments of tools were found. The ceramic material was composed of pottery fragments of Cernavoda and Gumelnița type. The frequency of the first ones gradually decreased detrimental to the last ones until 1,90/2,00 m. That was the depth where we stopped our excavations in 1988.

We consider worth to notice that both in the dwelling level and in the levelled stratum beneath it, among the ceramic material there were noticed strong influences of Gumelnița type.

Although badly damaged by holes that belonged to later dwellings, the inferior Cernavoda level kept the remains of four dwelling. But because of the ulterior interventions, we miss the information regarding their initial shape and size.

From the building point of view, all of them were built in the same way. The walls were built of a wattle-and-daub covered with clay and chaff. The floor was of yellow clay mixed with sand and well beaten. The roof was made of reed or straws. To each dwelling there were noticed rebuildings of the walls.

The pottery of the complexes is of an unitary sort. There are two categories:

1) *The rough pottery* This one is differentiated from that of the upper level as it has less shells in its composition. Ground potsherds and sometime fine gra-

¹ D. Galbenu, SCIV, 23, 2, 1962, p. 285—305.

² D. Popovici, P. Hașotti, D. Galbenu, Lecture held in Tîrgoviște at the session of annual reports, 1986.

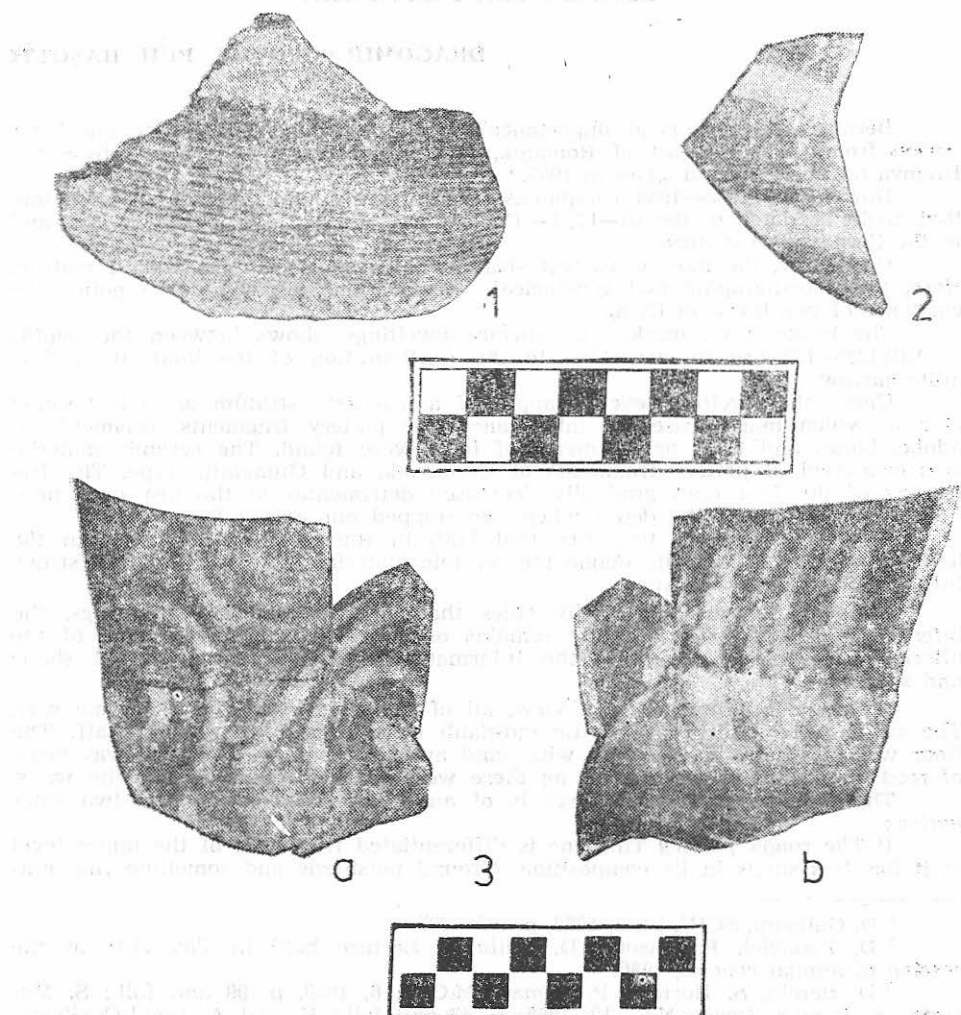
³ D. Berciu, S. Horintz, P. Roman, M.C.A., 6, 1959, p. 99 and foll.; S. Morintz, P. Roman, *Dacia*, N.S., 12, 1968, p. 47 and foll.; V. and A. Dodd-Oprîtescu, S.C.I.V.A. 32, 4, 1981, p. 511 and foll.; P. Roman, S.C.I.V.A., 32, 1, 1981, p. 27—28.

nulated sand were used. Sometime, this pottery has a bond of brown- yellowish clay outside it. In the excavations, its color is black-greish.

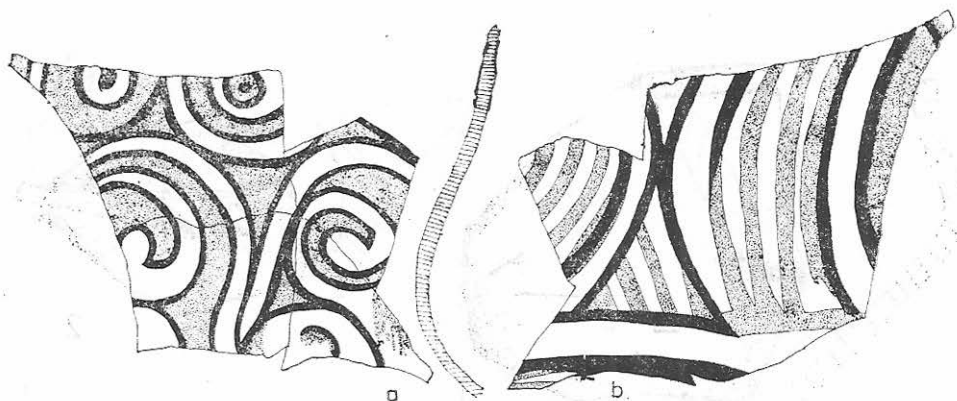
To this category belong the vessels with thick walls and of rather big size. The most common shapes are those in a shape of a bitruncated cone with narrowed and easily enlarged lips. Generally finished in a careless, way, they have no decoration.

2) *The fine pottery.* It is well moulded, homogeneous and burnt. Its colors are black-grey of light-brown. In the composition there is sand and a little ground shell Sometime is completely missing.

From this sort of paste there were made vessels polished on either sides. The most common shapes were in the shape of a bitruncated (Pl. 3/1—3, Pl. 4/1, 4) cone tureen with rounde profile and a higher upper part. There were also bowls quite high and large with a right and narrowed lip that was: enlarging sometime (Pl. 4/2, 3).



Planșa 1



Planşa 2

Unlike the fine pottery of the upperlevel, the corded decoration and the tubular handles were completely missing.

All those characteristics shortly presented above, define in our view an early horizon of the Cernavoda I culture that could be assimilated to the earliest level of dwellings of the eponymous site.

In this context, a special interest is held by the discovery of some painted pottery fragments from the Cucuteni culture (Pl. 1/2, 3, Pl. 2), discovered quite near of two of the dwellings of this level (no 5 & 7)⁴.

To these ones it was added a ceramic fragment of „C type“ (Pl. 1/1, Pl. 3/4), moulded from a paste of Cucuteni type. It was red-burnt but had in its composition ground shell and had a painted decoration together with triangular impressing⁵.

The characteristic traits of these pottery fragments, their shapes, the paste and the decoration allow us to date them in a period corresponding to Cucuteni A₃ and A₄ periods. The existence of the ornamentation made with a narrow band (Pl. 1/2) on the fragments of the partially reconstituted vessel, as the existence of a single vessel with thick band decoration might rather indicate Cucuteni A₄ phase⁶.

To draw a conclusion, the identification of an inhabitation level belonging to the first phase of the Cucuteni culture at Hirşova confirms the opinions according to which the penetration of this culture in the Gumelniţa area in a first phase is synchronous with the penetration of the „C type“ ceramic in the area of the Cucuteni culture⁷.

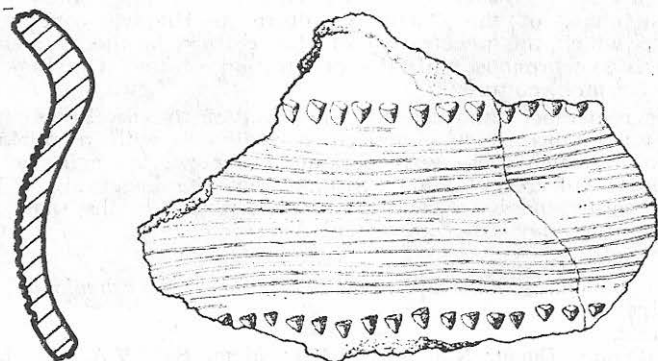
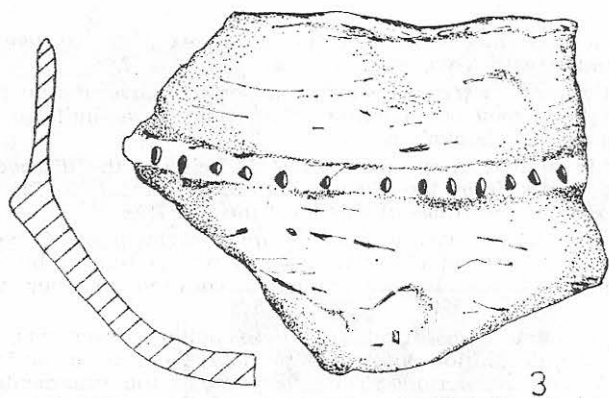
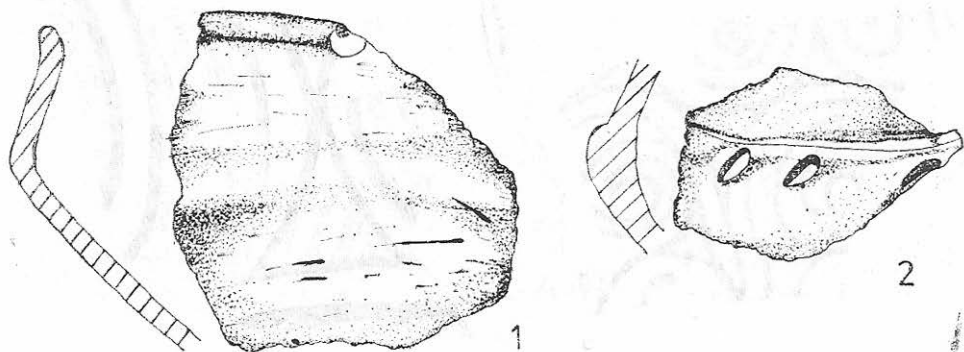
If we remember that beneath the level of the dwellings that marked the period of inhabitation it was noticed a sediment with a thickness between 0,40—0,50 m in which there were ceramic fragments belonging to the Cernavoda and Gumelniţa cultures, we may assume that the beginning of the Cernavoda inhabitation here could be a little earlier, but placed in the same chronology and most probably corresponding to Cucuteni A₃ period.

⁴ D. Popovici, P. Haşotti, D. Galbenu, *Cercetări arheologice*, IX, sub tipar.

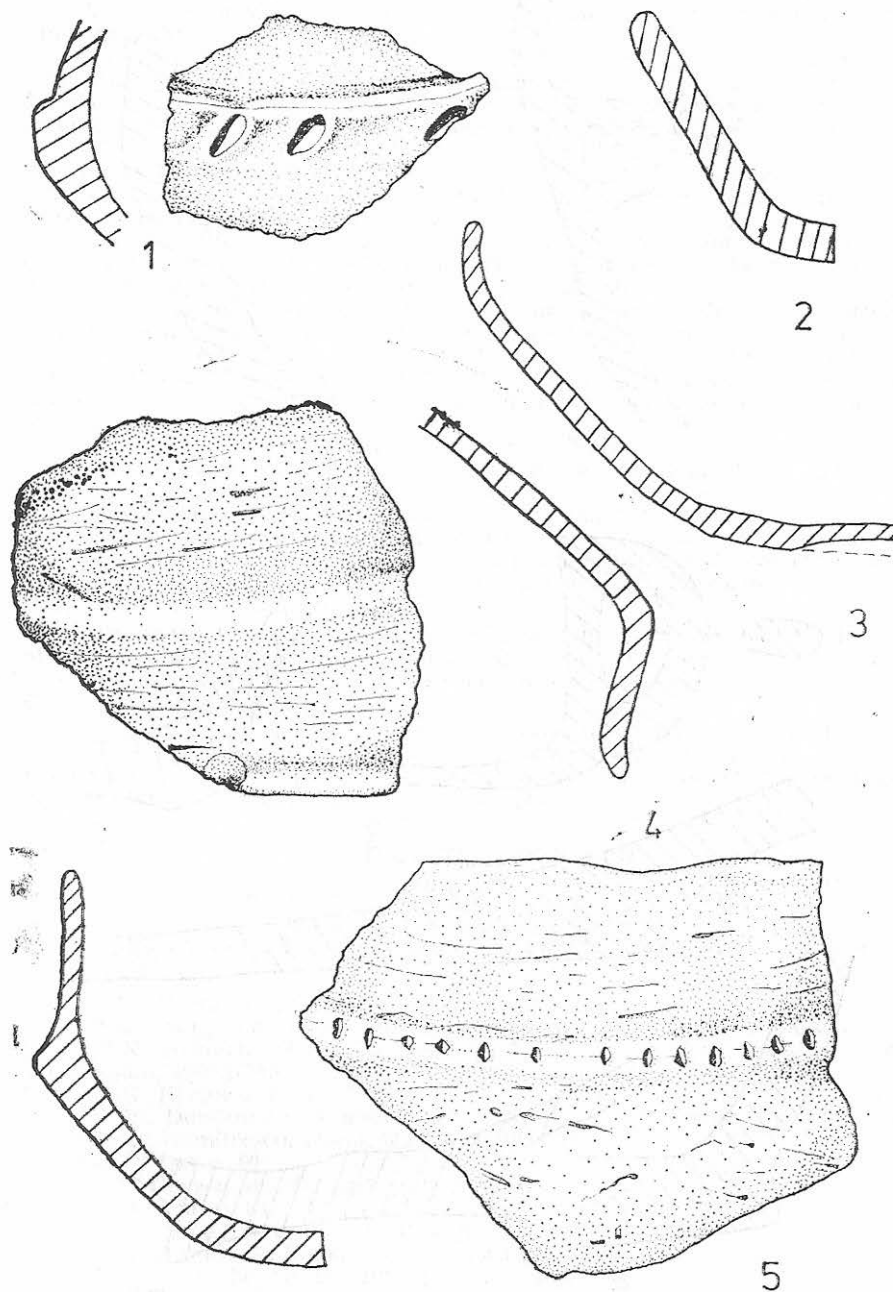
⁵ *ibidem*.

⁶ *ibidem*.

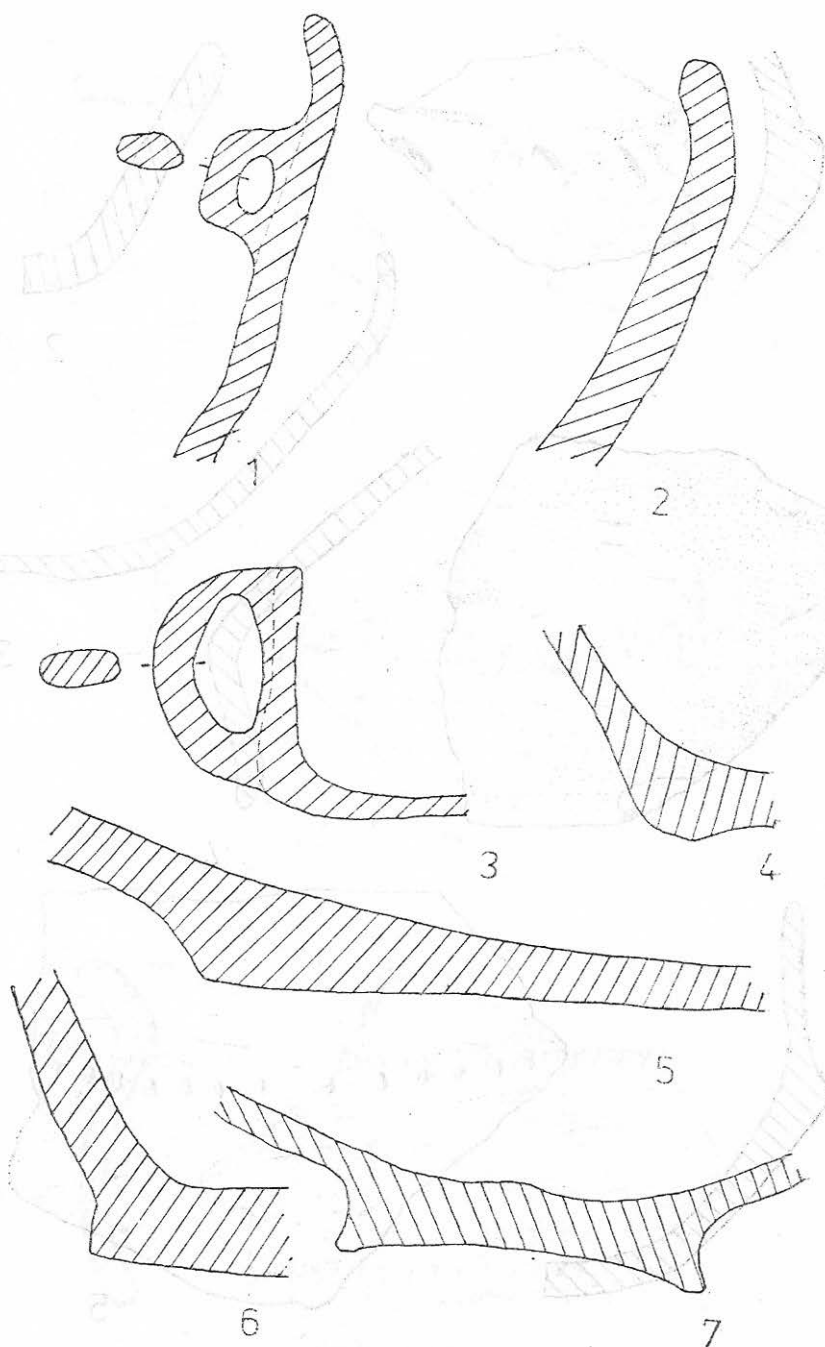
⁷ P. Roman, *Dacia*, N.S. 15, p. 129; *idem*, S.C.I.V.A., 33, 4, 1982, p. 405; although in S.C.I.V.A., 29, 2, 1978, p. 220 the author (P. Roman) seems rather to incline towards the synchronism Cernavoda I = Cucuteni A—B and B; N. Harţuche, *Istros*, I, 1980, p. 86.



Planșa 3



Planșa 4



Planşa 5

There are worth to mention the observations according to which the ceramic material belonging to the Cernavoda culture from that level, presents a lot of the Gumelnița type influences.

In the context of the links that existed between the Cucuteni and the Gumelnița cultures, as well as between the first ones and the Cernavoda culture we may notice that at this time we have a great number of datas that allow us to make a better and more precis notation of the synchronism schedule.

The discoveries from Brăilița⁸ (A II level)⁹, Lișcoteanca — „Movila Olaru-lui“ („The Potters's Knoll“), „Movila Moș Filon“ („Old Man Filon's Knoll“), „Movila din Baltă“ („The Knoll the Marsh“) and Carcaliu¹¹ assure the parallelism between Gumelnița A₂ and Cucuteni A₃ periods¹².

On the other side, studying the discoveries from Gumelnița and Căscioarele¹³ it was proved that in Gumelnița B₁ phase there were kept in touch all the contacts with the Cucuteni tribes from Cucuteni A₃ phase¹⁴.

The imports from the B II level from Brăila attributed to Cucuteni 4,¹⁵ come to certify the synchronism between Gumelnița B₁ and Cucuteni A₄¹⁶.

In the area of the Cernavoda I culture the first mentioned Cucutenian imports (although not very certain ones) were the frag. ments discovered at Oltenița — Renic.¹⁷ This settlement was dated as belonging to a late phase of the respective culture¹⁸.

The researches made at Rimnicelu¹⁹ allowed the identification of some Cucuteni fragments of painted pottery dated as Cucuteni B₂ in the Cernavoda I site.

Some similar imports were noticed at Pietroasele²⁰.

Taking all these things into consideration, the discoveries from Hirșova might indicate the first moment of the penetration of the Cernavoda communities on the Danube line towards south in a moment that corresponded to the end of Cucuteni A₃ and A₄ periods.

The stratigraphy of the sediments from Hirșova might suggest the existence of several phases in the evolutin of the Cernavoda I phase. This idea was strengthened by the fact that this phase seemed to exist till the corresponding pried of Cucuteni A—B₁ phase.

Appearing for the first time at the Lower Danube in a period that corresponded to the Cucuteni A₃ phase (the last one), the Cernavoda I culture will know a long evolution. Its important moments and moods of exprimation will be better known in the future, as the researches go on.

ILLUSTRATIONS LIST

Pl. 1/1, Pl. 3/4 — Cucuteni fragments, type C.

Pl. 1/2, Pl. 2 — Cucuteni fragments A 4.

Pl. 3/1, 3, Pl. 4, Pl. 5 — Ceramic belonging to Cernavoda I culture.

⁸ N. Harțușe, M.C.A. V, 1959, p. 224—226.

⁹ E. Comșa, *La civilisation de Cucuteni en contexte européen*, 1987, p. 83—84.

¹⁰ N. Harțușe, *Istros*, V, 1987, p. 7 and foll.; idem *Studii și comunicări*, III, Focșani, 1980 p. 15.

¹¹ N. Harțușe *Istros*, I, 1980, p. 30.

¹² Vl. Dumitrescu, *Apulum*, VII/I, 1968, p. 40; E. Comșa, *op. cit.*, 1987, p. 83.

¹³ Vl. Dumitrescu, *Dacia*, N.S. VIII, 1964, p. 60.

¹⁴ *ibidem* p. 60.

¹⁵ E. Comșa, *op. cit.*, 1987, p. 83—84.

¹⁶ *ibidem*, p. 84.

¹⁷ Vl. Dumitrescu, *op. cit.*, 1968, p. 40.

¹⁸ S. Morintz, P. Roman, *op. cit.*, 1968, p. 45 and foll.

¹⁹ N. Harțușe, *op. cit.*, 1980, p. 33 and foll.

²⁰ *ibidem*, p. 86.

²¹ *ibidem*, p. 86; A. Dodd-Oprișescu, *op. cit.*, 1981, p. 525.

²² N. Harțușe, *op. cit.*, 1980, p. 86.