

THE DACIAN PAINTED POTTERY DISCOVERED AT ARDEU, HUNEDOARA COUNTY, ROMANIA

IOSIF VASILE FERENCZ

Muzeul Civilizației Dacice și Romane, Deva
fiosifvasile@yahoo.com

Cuvinte cheie: daci, cetate, Ardeu, ceramică, Munții Apuseni

Keywords: Dacians, fortress, Ardeu, pottery, Apuseni Mountains

The Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilization - Deva (written further: MCDR Deva) began in the summer of 2001 archaeological researches on the territory of the Ardeu village, Hunedoara county, Romania. The investigations were focused on the Cetățuie Hill and also on the water meadow of the Valea Ardeului brook, on the southern side of the hill. Together with the Deva museum, some other institutions were involved: "1 Decembrie 1918" University, Alba Iulia, National Museum of Transylvanian History, Cluj-Napoca, Corvin Castle Museum, Hunedoara and the Systemic Archaeology Institute, Alba Iulia.

More than a decade after, we can count some achievements and many new directions are opened, too.

Some artifacts discovered during this time were already published and now we are continuing to introduce some new pieces in the archaeological literature. For this paper we chose to present the painted pottery found at Ardeu until 2004.

The Dacian hillfort from Ardeu is an archaeological site which was discovered at the end of the 19th century. The researches which started in that time are connected to the Deva museum. This institution had influenced its destiny for more than a century. The first references about the archaeological material discovered at Ardeu and the first images of the site were published by Téglás Gábor, the first director of the museum¹. More than fifty years after, Larisa Nemoianu attempted an archaeological survey on the top of the hill² during a campaign organized by the Deva museum. But only systematical and salvage excavations, which have been organized since 1999 until present³, permitted to formulate some conclusions regarding the Dacian hillfort and the Dacian settlement⁴. Nowadays, when analyses of several artifacts and archaeological contexts are already completed, some of the older conclusions may be nuanced.

In the last decade, different categories of pieces discovered at Ardeu were presented to the public or to the researchers in exhibitions, presentations, studies or exhibitions catalogues⁵.

In this paper we will describe a category of special artifacts – the painted shards found until 2004. Even if ceramics are, generally speaking, the most usual category of archaeological material, the painted pottery appears less frequently among the Dacian

¹ Téglás 1885, p.299-307; Téglás 1888. See also Ferencz 2012a.

² Nemoianu, Andrițoiu 1975.

³ Pescaru *et al.* 2000; Pescaru *et al.* 2002; Ferencz *et al.* 2003; Ferencz *et al.* 2004; Ferencz *et al.* 2005; Ferencz *et al.* 2010; Ferencz *et al.* 2011.

⁴ Bodó, Ferencz 2003; Ferencz, Roman 2010, p. 173-184; Ferencz 2012b, p. 47-49.

⁵ See Ferencz 2012a, notes No. 3, 4 and 5.

antiquities⁶. We also have to mention that, in the last years, fragments belonging to some painted vessels were also discovered. But those pieces will be the subject of another paper.

The presentation was structured based on the vessels' functionality, attempting to understand them better. From this point of view, the Dacian painted vessels represented by the pieces discovered at Ardeu could be considered as belonging to the following types: *kantharoi*, flagons or jugs, bowls; but there are also other vessels which are difficult to be identified in detail. Some of the fragments are pieces belonging to vessels which are specific to the Central European areas, inhabited by the Celts.

Description of the pieces

1. Two pieces belonging to a painted vessel (Pl. II/1-3). They were discovered during the 2002 campaign (ditch SI⁷, square 8, - 0,60 m depth), on the top of the *Cetățuie* Hill in Ardeu. They are preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No. 40322⁸. The fragments belong to a drinking vessel with two handles (*kantharos*). Its superior part had a cylindrical shape, but the lower one had a truncated cone shape with its big base orientated upwards.

It was made on the potter's wheel using a good ceramic paste in which the clay was blended by fine sand. Its surface was smoothened on the exterior. It has an rounded rim and the bottom had probably a foot ring, but it was not preserved. Only one of the handles is preserved. It has a profiling aspect and perhaps the other one probably had the same shape, if we take into account the analogies⁹. The paint was applied on the surface of the vessel in brown lines, on different areas of the vessel: under the rim, on the handles and down to the maximum diameter place.

2. Ceramic fragment belonging to a rim of a painted vessel (Pl. II/4-5). It was discovered in the 2002 campaign, very close to the pieces already described, but in another ditch, named SVA¹⁰. It is preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No 40325¹¹. The piece probably belonged to a jug.

Made on the potter's wheel, it had a good quality ceramic paste with fine sand. Its rim is rounded and it is decorated with red undulated lines of paint, placed starting under the rim, and colored in red. On the fragment preserved, only two lines can be seen.

3. Ceramic fragment belonging to a rim of a painted vessel (Pl. II/6-7). It was discovered during the 2004 campaign (ditch SVB¹², square 3, - 0,25 – 0,9 m depth), also on the top of the *Cetățuie* Hill in Ardeu. It is preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No 41078¹³. It is difficult to say more about the shape of the vessel, but taking into consideration its profile we can suppose that it is a bowl.

The vessel was made from a good quality paste, with sand, on the potter's wheel. It is decorated with parallel red or brown lines.

4. Two fragments belonging to the upper part of a painted vessel (Pl. III/1-2). They were discovered during the 2002 campaign (ditch SI¹⁴, square 7, - 0, 10 – 0, 40 m

⁶ These pieces were presented for the first time at the Scientific Session organized by the National Museum from Alba Iulia (the 21st-22nd of November 2006).

⁷ Ferencz *et al.* 2003, p. 41.

⁸ Ferencz 2011, p. 39.

⁹ See for example: Berciu 1981, Pl. 56/2; Pl. 60/1-2; Ursachi 1995, Pl. 103/1; 131/8; 151/8; Vulpe, Teodor 2003, Fig. 199/7, Fig 201/8, Fig. 229/1.

¹⁰ Ferencz *et al.* 2003, p. 41.

¹¹ Ferencz 2011, p. 38.

¹² Ferencz *et al.* 2005, p. 57.

¹³ Ferencz 2011, p. 38.

¹⁴ Ferencz *et al.* 2003, p. 41.

depth). They are preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No 40315¹⁵. The vessel had a biconical shape and it was made from a good quality paste on the potter's wheel.

On the surface of the vessel, smoothened on the exterior, a white-yellowish layer of paint was applied and then, some narrow and wide stripes of brown-reddish color were painted. In the lower part, the paint was applied into a network register from which little is preserved. The neck of the vessel was also covered with painted narrow stripes.

5. Fragment belonging to the bottom of a painted vessel (Pl. III/3-4). Probably the piece had belonged to a flagon or a jug. It was discovered during the 2004 campaign (ditch SVB¹⁶, square 4, - 0,25 – 0,40 m depth). It is preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No 41076¹⁷.

The vessel was made from good quality paste on the potter's wheel and it has a reddish color. On the surface of the vessel, smoothened on the exterior, a layer of white-yellowish paint was applied. On this layer, the vessel was painted with narrow stripes of brown-reddish color.

6. Two fragments belonging to the middle area of a painted vessel (Pl. III/5-6). They were discovered during the 2002 campaign (ditch SI¹⁸, square 8, - 0, 80 m depth) and they are preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No 40316¹⁹. The vessel had a biconical shape and it was made using the potter's wheel using a fine paste with sand, and it has a reddish color.

The painting consists of red stripes of different widths.

7. Fragment belonging to the middle area of a painted vessel (Pl. III/7-8). It was discovered during the 2002 campaign (ditch SVB²⁰, square 3, - 0, 25 – 0, 90 m depth) and it is preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No 41077²¹. The vessel has a biconical shape and it was made using the potter's wheel using a fine paste with sand, and it has a reddish color.

The surface of the vessel was smoothened on the exterior and then a layer of white-yellowish paint was applied. On this layer the vessel was painted with stripes of different widths of brown-reddish color.

8. Two rim fragments (Pl. IV/1-3). They were discovered during the 2002 campaign (ditch SVA²², square 10, - 0, 10 – 0, 35 m depth; SVA, *passim*) and they are preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No 40326 and 40317²³. It is difficult to specify exactly the type of the vessel, but we can suppose it was a conical bowl. The handle mark (or the handles) which can be seen could point to a drinking vessel. It was made using the potter's wheel from a fine paste with sand, and it has a reddish color.

The reddish paint was laid in narrow stripes, but also in straight or undulated lines.

9. Fragment belonging to the middle area of a painted vessel (Pl. IV/4-5). It was discovered during the 2001 campaign (ditch SII²⁴) and it is preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No. 41079²⁵. The vessel had a biconical shape and it was made using the potter's wheel using a fine paste.

¹⁵ Ferencz 2011, p. 38.

¹⁶ Ferencz *et al.* 2005, p. 57.

¹⁷ Ferencz 2011, p. 38.

¹⁸ Ferencz *et al.* 2003, p. 41.

¹⁹ Unpublished.

²⁰ Ferencz *et al.* 2003, p. 41.

²¹ Ferencz 2011, p. 38.

²² Ferencz *et al.* 2003, p. 41.

²³ Ferencz 2011, p. 38.

²⁴ Pescaru *et al.* 2002.

²⁵ Ferencz 2011, p. 39.

The surface of the vessel was smoothened on the exterior and then a layer of white-yellowish paint was applied. On this layer the vessel was painted with lines of different widths of reddish color. Some of the lines are straight and others are undulated.

10. Fragment belonging to the middle area of a painted vessel (Pl. V/1-2). It was discovered during the 2002 campaign (ditch SVA²⁶, square 6, - 0, 60 m depth) and it is preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No. 41096²⁷. The fragment belongs to a tall vessel and it was made from a fine paste using the potter's wheel.

On the surface of the vessel a white-yellowish layer of paint was applied and then wide stripes of red paint.

11. Fragment belonging to the middle area of a painted vessel (Pl. V/3-4). It was discovered during the 2002 campaign (ditch SI²⁸, square 1, - 0, 85 m depth, very close to the other fragment) and it is preserved in MCDR Deva, Inv. No 40314²⁹. The vessel was made using the potter's wheel using a fine paste.

On the surface of the vessel a white-yellowish layer of paint was applied and then wide stripes of red paint.

Technical aspects

As we have already seen in the catalogue of the pieces which we presented, all the fragments belong to vessels made on the potter's wheel. This is the case of most of the Dacian painted vessels³⁰. There are also other painted ceramic objects, apart from vessels, made using different technologies, and with different functions³¹.

The colors of the ceramics are reddish or white-yellowish and these nuances are particular to other painted vessels from the Dacian world³². The ingredients which are used to make the vessels were chosen carefully and the sand is often difficult to be seen. Sometime the exterior surface of the pot is smoothened and some kind of polishing may be noted. This is the case of the vessel illustrated by us (Pl. I/1-3) and described on the first position. There are many situations, in different Dacian sites, in which the painting was applied on the polished surface of some vessels³³.

The color of the paint on the Dacian vessels discovered at Ardeu has different nuances. This kind of chromatic diversity is specific for the Dacian painted pottery³⁴. The decorative motifs are represented by straight and undulated lines, or by a net pattern (No 4 in the catalogue, Pl. II/1-2). The paint was applied with a paintbrush at the time the vessel was made on the potter's wheel.

The fragments described by us under the numbers 10 and 11 (Pl. V) are parts of some vessels coming, very probably, from the Central European areas inhabited by the Celts³⁵. On the surface of these pots, the paint has the aspect of an alternation of red and white stripes (Pl. V).

Regarding the shape of the painted vessels presented by us, we have to notice that they had different functions. Some of them were used for drinking or for storing

²⁶ Ferencz *et al.* 2003, p. 41.

²⁷ Ferencz 2011, p. 39.

²⁸ Ferencz *et al.* 2003, p. 41.

²⁹ Ferencz 2011, p. 38.

³⁰ Florea 1998, p. 92.

³¹ Florea 1998, p. 92.

³² Florea 1998, p. 91.

³³ Florea 1998, p. 94.

³⁴ Florea 1998, p. 95.

³⁵ Crişan 1969, p. 201; Florea 1998, p. 88.

liquids, others were used for eating and other ones for storing (?) provisions, as for some others it is difficult to understand their utility.

The presence of the paint on some vessels used commonly for eating appears in some other Dacian hillforts too³⁶, even if they are rare at Grădiștea Muncelului³⁷. The closest archaeological site where similar fragmentary vessels were found is the Dacian hillfort Piatra Craivii. Sometimes the identity between the ceramic fragments coming from different places is too obvious. This is the case of the fragmentary vessel illustrated by us (Pl. III/3-4) which has good analogies at Piatra Craivii³⁸. We can see that comparing the pictures, even if the angle chosen by the drawer in the case of the Piatra Craivii shard is not the best one.

The small number of fragments, reported to the entire quantity of pottery founded at Ardeu, makes us to believe that the painted vessels could be interpreted as luxury merchandise. It is possible that this kind of goods were purchased to be exposed or maybe to be used on some special occasions. About the character, the role and the functionality of the Dacian painted vessels, different scholars displayed their opinions. But the judgment given out by Constantin Daicoviciu at the middle of the 20th century on the painted pottery as "...an aboriginal luxury pottery"³⁹, remains actual and it can be broadened to the entire Dacian world, even if he referred only to the vessels discovered at Grădiștea Muncelului.

Bibliography

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Berciu 1981 | – D. Berciu, <i>Buridava dacică</i> , București 1981. |
| Bodó, Ferencz 2003 | – C. Bodó, I. V. Ferencz, <i>Câteva considerații privind fortificația și așezarea dacică de la Ardeu (com. Balșa), jud. Hunedoara</i> , in <i>Istros</i> , 11, 2003, p. 147-158. |
| Crișan 1969 | – I. H. Crișan, <i>Ceramica daco-getică. Cu specială privire la Transilvania</i> , București 1969. |
| Daicoviciu et al. 1953 | – C. Daicoviciu et al., <i>Șantierul arheologic Grădiștea Muncelului</i> , in <i>SCIV</i> , 4, 1-2, 1953, p. 153-194. |
| Ferencz 2010 | – I. V. Ferencz, <i>Despre o casetă de valori descoperită la Ardeu</i> , în <i>Terra Sebus</i> 2, 2010, p. 225-233. |
| Ferencz 2011 | – I. V. Ferencz ed., <i>Artă și meșteșug în epoca Regatului Dac. Ceramica. Catalog de expoziție</i> , Deva, 2011. |
| Ferencz 2012a | – I. V. Ferencz, <i>Aproape un secol de uitare. Unele repere istoriografice privind cetatea dacică de la Ardeu</i> , in the vol. ed. C. Drăgan, C. Barna, <i>Studii de istorie a Transilvaniei. Volum dedicat istoricului Ioachim Lazăr la 70 de ani</i> , Cluj-Napoca/Deva, 2012, p. 70-84. |
| Ferencz 2012b | – I. V. Ferencz, <i>The Dacian fortress of Ardeu</i> , in I. V. Ferencz, C. Beldiman coords., <i>Art and craftsmanship during Dacian kingdom. Bone and antler artifacts. Catalogue</i> , Cluj-Napoca, 2012, p. 47-49. |

³⁶ For example at Piatra Craivii: Berciu, Moga 1974, p. 72-73, see also Pl. I-IV.

³⁷ Florea, Palkó 1991, p. 47; Florea 1998, p. 176.

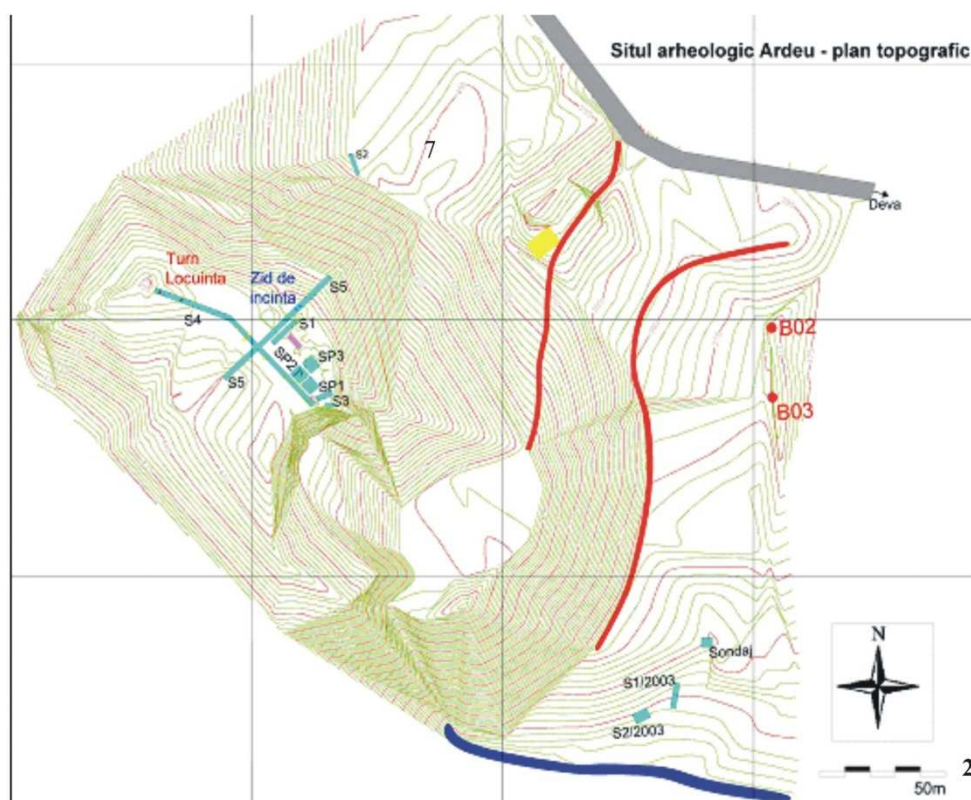
³⁸ Berciu, Moga 1974, p. 73, nr. 11, Pl. IV/2.

³⁹ Daicoviciu et al. 1953, p. 185.

- Ferencz *et al.* 2003 – I. V. Ferencz, M. Căstăian, C. Bodó, C. I. Popa, Șt. Andrei, R. Stăncescu, *Ardeu, com. Balșa, jud. Hunedoara, punct Cetățeaia*, in *CCA, Campania 2002*, Covasna, 2003, p. 40-42.
- Ferencz *et al.* 2004 – I. V. Ferencz, M. Căstăian, C. Bodó, C. I. Popa, Șt. Andrei, R. Stăncescu, *Ardeu, com. Balșa, jud. Hunedoara, punct Cetățuie (Cetățeaia)*, in *CCA, Campania 2003*, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 43-45.
- Ferencz *et al.* 2005 – I. V. Ferencz, C. Bodó, M. Căstăian, *Ardeu, com. Balșa, jud. Hunedoara, punct Cetățuie*, in *CCA, Campania 2004*, Jupiter-Mangalia, 2005, p. 56-57.
- Ferencz *et al.* 2010 – I. V. Ferencz, C. M. Căstăian, C. Dima, C. C. Roman, C. I. Popa, *Ardeu (com. Balșa, jud. Hunedoara)*, in *CCA, Campania 2009*, Suceava, 2010, p. 28-29.
- Ferencz *et al.* 2011 – I. V. Ferencz, C. M. Căstăian, C. Dima, C. C. Roman, C. I. Popa, *Ardeu (com. Balșa, jud. Hunedoara)*, in *CCA, Campania 2010*, Sibiu, 2012, p. 28-29.
- Florea, Palkó 1991 – G. Florea, A. Palkó, *Ceramica dacică pictată de pe „Terasa depozitului de vase” de la Grădiștea Muncelului*, in *EphNap*, I, 1991, p. 41-52.
- Florea 1998 – G. Florea, *Ceramica pictată. Artă, meșteșug și societate în Dacia preromană (sec. I a. Chr. – I p. Chr.)*, Cluj-Napoca, 1998.
- Ferencz, Roman 2010 – I. V. Ferencz, C. Roman, *The Dacian fortress from Ardeu – research directions*, in *ActaTS*, 9, 2010, p. 173-184.
- Berciu, Moga 1974 – V. Moga, *Ceramica pictată din cetatea de la Piatra Craivii*, in *Apulum*, XII, 1974, p. 70-78.
- Nemoianu, Andrițoiu 1975 – L. Nemoianu, I. Andrițoiu, *Sondajul arheologic de la Ardeu, com. Balșa, jud. Hunedoara*, in *CerArh*, 1, 1975, p. 181-190.
- Pescaru *et al.* 2000 – A. Pescaru, M. Căstăian, C. Herța, *Ardeu, com. Balșa, jud. Hunedoara, punct Cetățeaia*, in *CCA, Campania 1999*, Deva, 2000, p. 15.
- Pescaru *et al.* 2002 – A. Pescaru, C. Bodó, M. Căstăian, I. V. Ferencz, *Ardeu, com. Balșa, jud. Hunedoara, punct Cetățeaia* in *CCA, Campania 2001*, Buziaș, 2002, p. 41-43.
- Téglas 1885 – G. Téglas, *Emlékek és leletek. Az Erdőfalvi barlangok*, in *ArchÉrt*, 5, 1885, p. 299-307.
- Ursachi 1995 – V. Ursachi, *Zargidava. Cetatea dacică de la Brad*, București, 1995.
- Vulpe, Teodor 2003 – R. Vulpe, S. Teodor, *Piroboridava. Așezarea dacică de la Poiana*, București, 1993

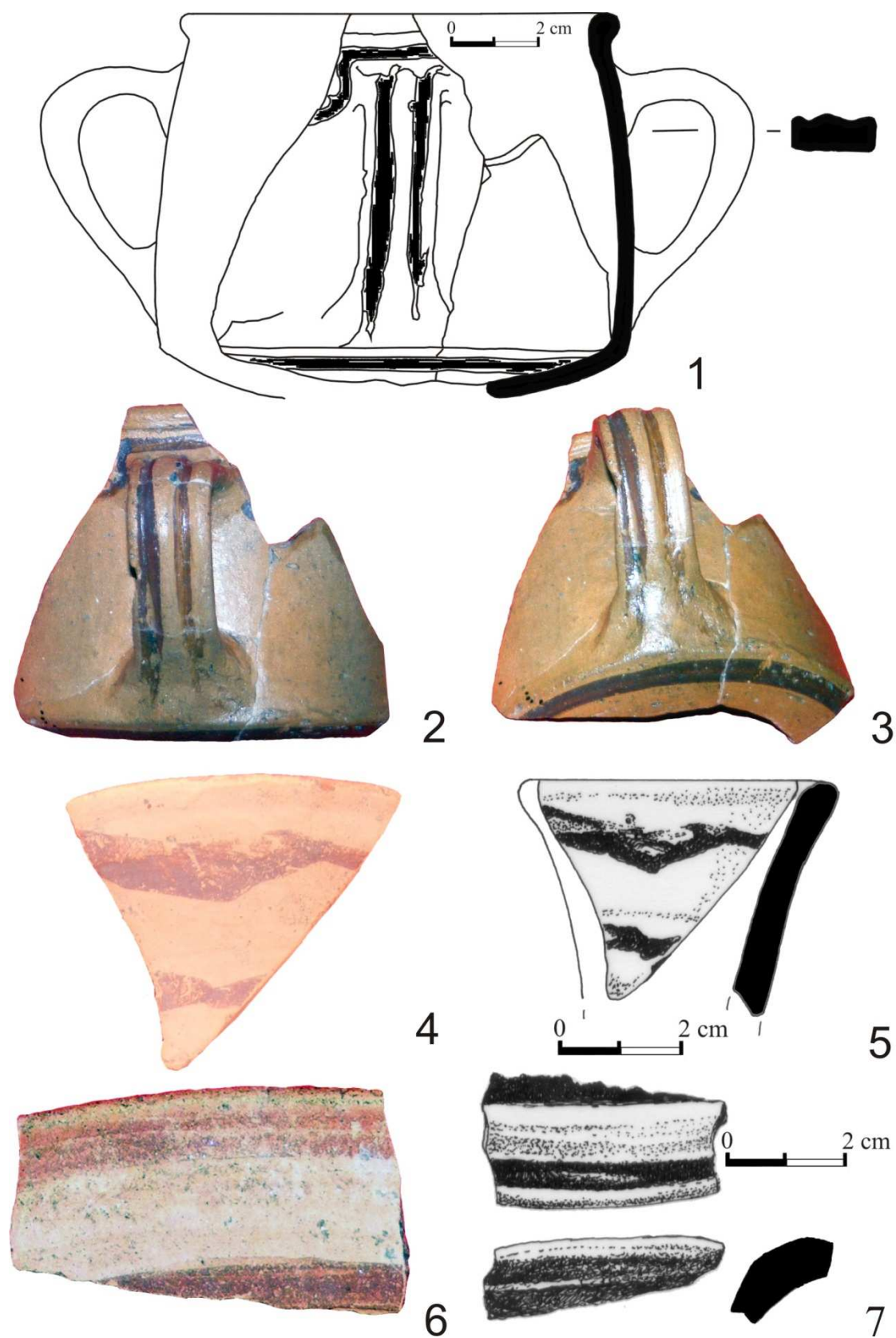


1.

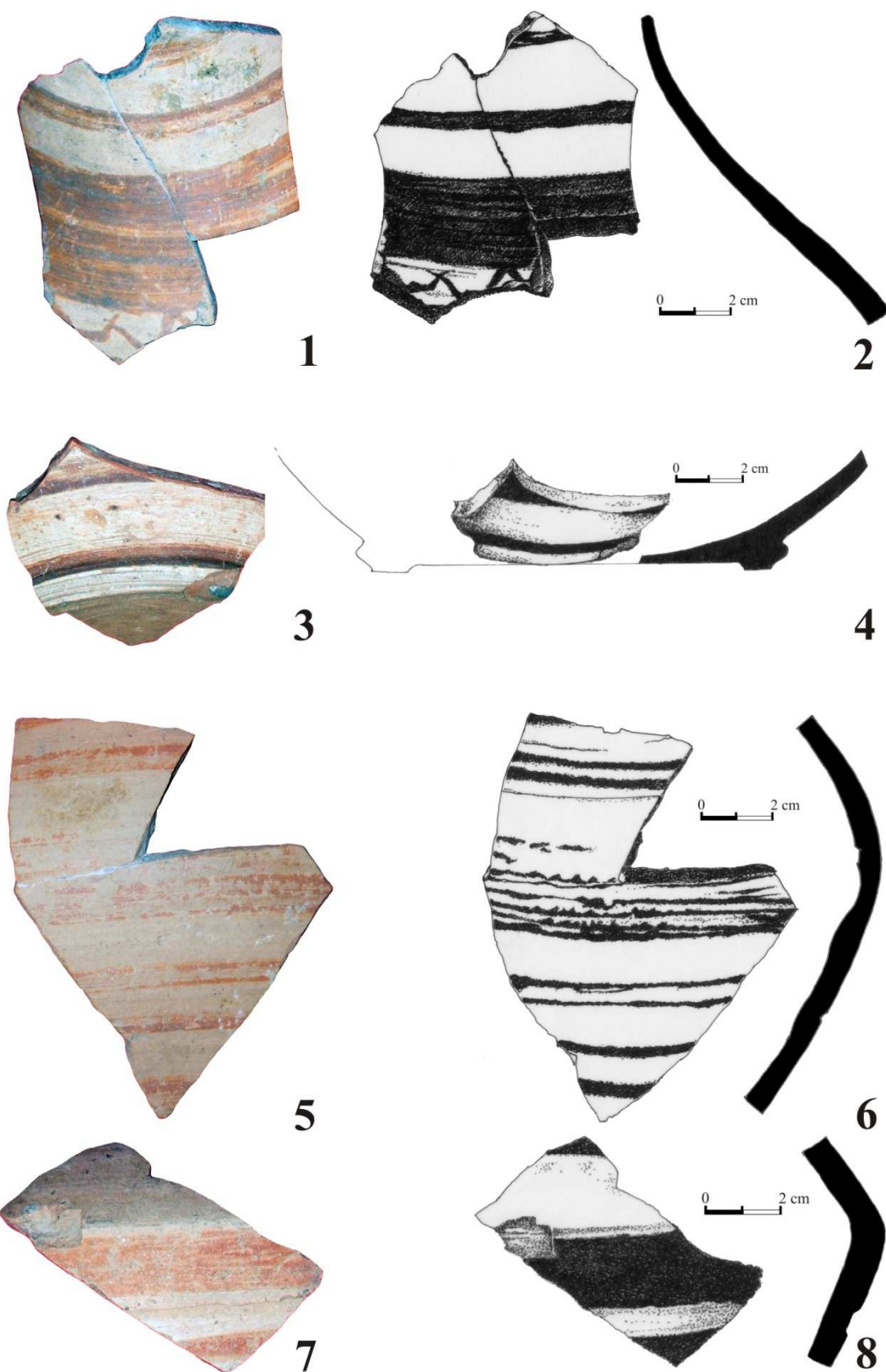


2.

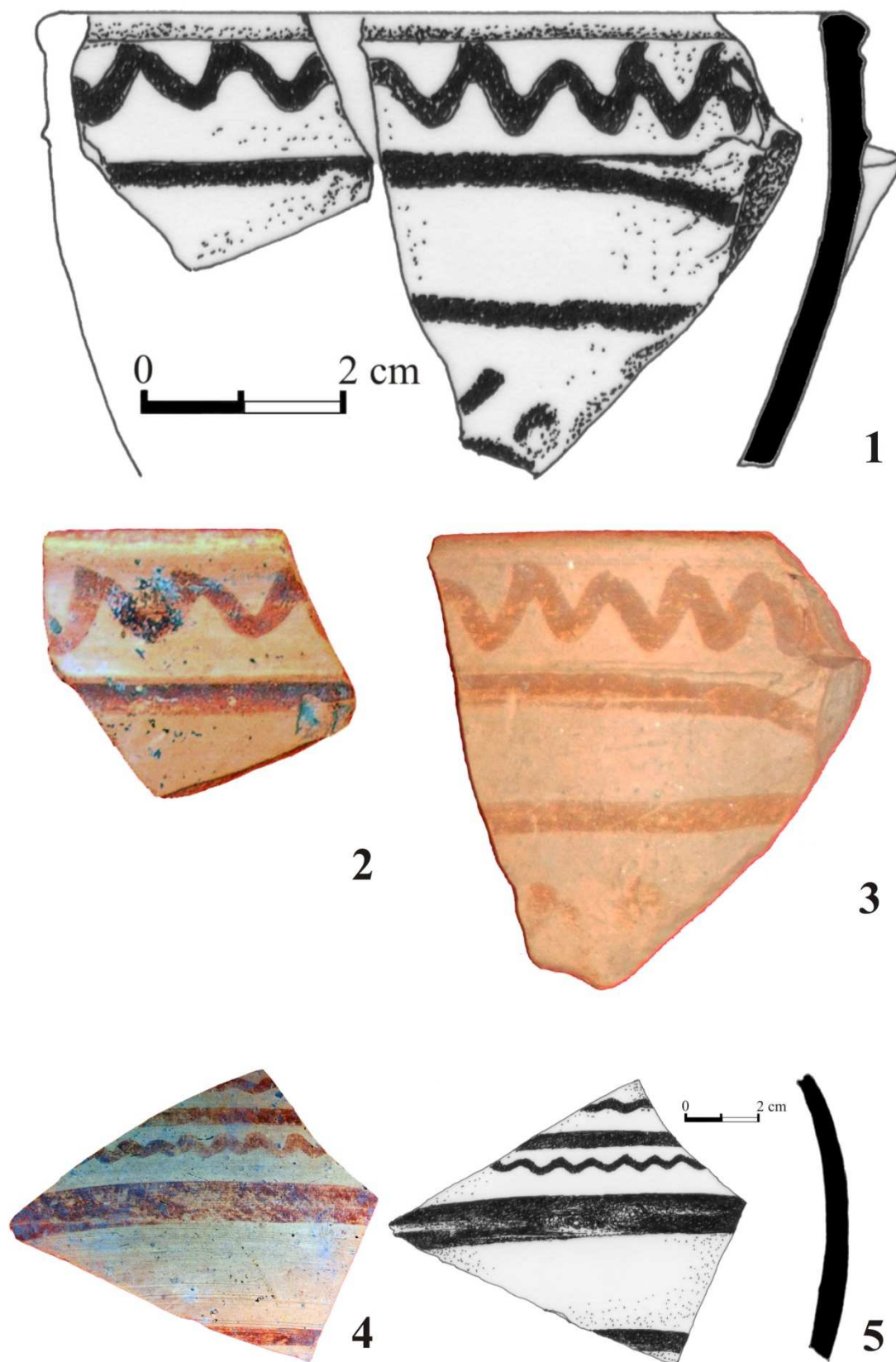
Pl. I. 1. The location of Ardeu village, after Ferencz 2010. **2.** Plan of the excavations on the *Cetățuie* Hill until 2004, made by Maria Magdalena Ștefan, from Digital Domain Bucharest



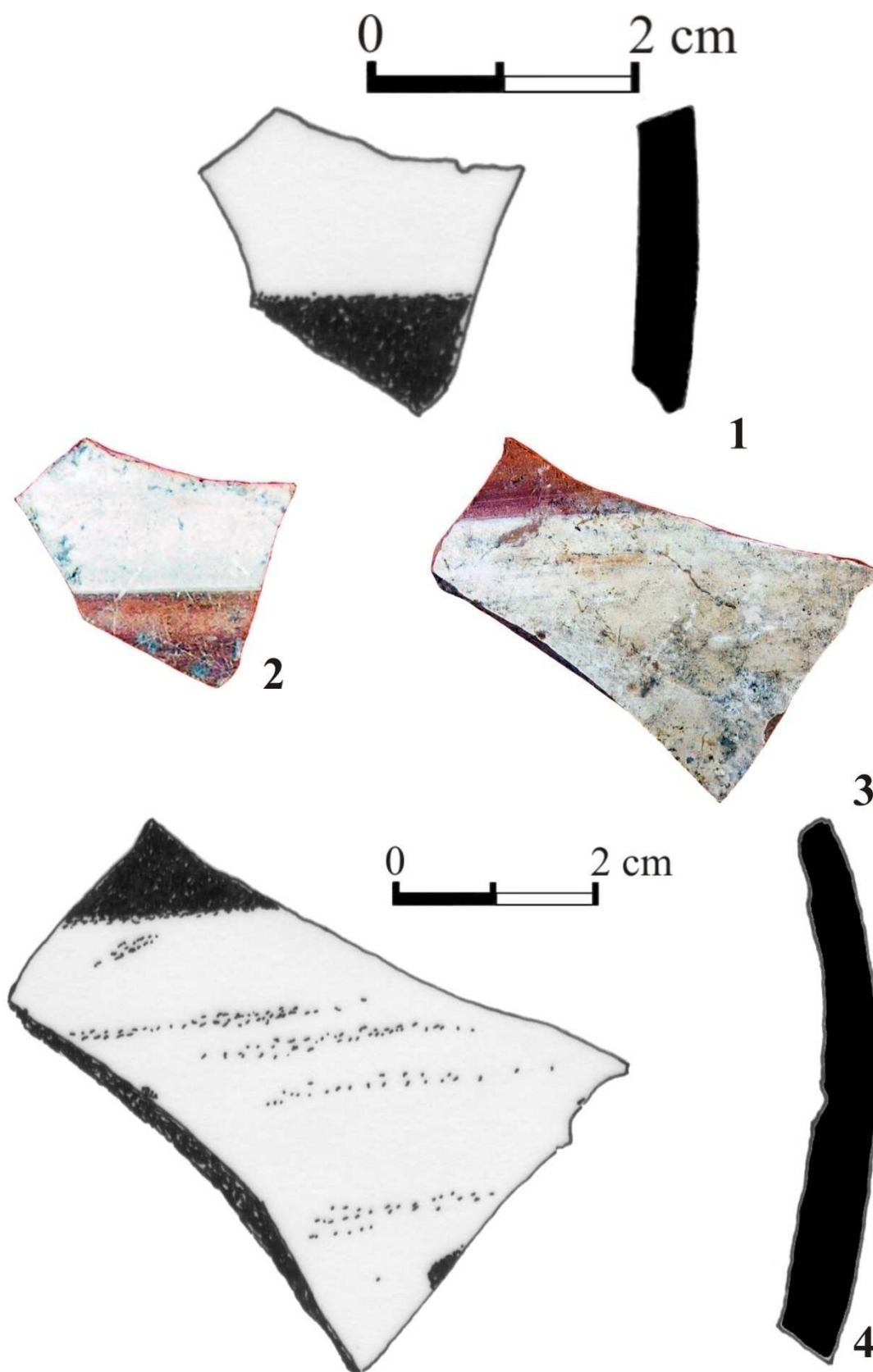
Pl. II. Painted pottery discovered at Ardeu



Pl. III. Painted pottery discovered at Ardeu



Pl. IV. Painted pottery discovered at Ardeu



Pl. V. Painted pottery discovered at Ardeu

Ceramica dacică pictată descoperită la Ardeu, județul Hunedoara, România

Rezumat

Cetatea dacică de la Ardeu este un sit arheologic descoperit la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea. Cercetarea lui încă din momentul descoperirii a fost strâns legată de muzeul din Deva, care i-a influențat destinul constant, timp de mai mult de un secol. Téglás Gábor, de numele căruia se leagă începuturile instituției muzeale devenite, a prezentat pentru prima oară mediului științific materiale arheologice și imagini ale sitului. Larisa Nemoianu a întreprins primul sondaj arheologic pe culmea dealului, în cadrul unei campanii organizate de Muzeul din Deva. Însă cercetările sistematice și cele cu caracter preventiv, organizate începând din anul 1999 și până în prezent, au permis formularea unor concluzii privind cetatea și așezarea dacică. Totodată, pe baza analizei descoperirilor unele concluzii ale cercetărilor anterioare au putut să fie nuanțate.

În ultimul deceniu, categorii diverse de materiale arheologice descoperite în timpul unor cercetări mai noi sau mai vechi au fost prezentate publicului larg ori celui de specialitate, prin expoziții, comunicări, studii și note științifice, cataloage de expoziții etc., în județul Hunedoara, precum și în alte centre din țară.

În prezenta lucrare am prezentat o categorie de artefacte care nu se distinge prin cantitate. Au fost prezentate fragmentele ceramice pictate, din epoca Regatului Dac, descoperite la Ardeu prin cercetări efectuate până în anul 2004. Menționăm că în ultimii ani au mai fost descoperite fragmente ale unor vase pictate, însă acestea vor face obiectul unui alt studiu.

Toate fragmentele pe care le vom prezenta provin de la vase din ceramică, confecționate la roată. Pieseile au fost structurate ținând cont de funcționalitatea vaselor, în încercarea de a înțelege mai bine aspectele pe care le implică. Din acest punct de vedere, vasele pictate descoperite la Ardeu pot fi încadrate în următoarele tipuri: kantharoi, căni sau ulcioare, străchini, precum și alte vase, a căror categorie nu poate fi precizată mai detaliat. Unele fragmente provin din vase specifice zonelor locuite de scordisci.

Numărul mic de fragmente raportat la întreaga cantitate de ceramică descoperită la Ardeu ne îndreptățește să considerăm vasele pictate ca reprezentând o marfă de lux, procurată cu scopul de a fi expusă ori pentru a fi folosită la servitul mesei în timpul unor ocazii speciale.

Lista ilustrațiilor

Pl. I. 1. Localizarea satului Ardeu. **2.** Plan topografic cu amplasarea unităților de cercetare până în 2004, realizat de Maria Magdalena Ștefan, de la Digital Domain București

Pl. II. Ceramică pictată descoperită la Ardeu

Pl. III. Ceramică pictată descoperită la Ardeu

Pl. IV. Ceramică pictată descoperită la Ardeu

Pl. V. Ceramică pictată descoperită la Ardeu