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**DRIDU-TYPE DWELLING IN PIETROASELE, BUZĂU COUNTY**

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The archaeological site of Pietroasele lies upon the contact of the Northern Bărăgan/Sărata Field and the first summits of the Subcarpathian Hills/Istria Hill. After working its way into the special literature through the great work of Alexandru Odobescu, "*Le Trésor de Pétrossa*", dedicated to the outstanding treasure and which presents the outcome of the first archaeological research carried out by the great scholar in the late Roman camp here, the site has become the subject of research initiated in 1972 by the "V. Pârvan" Archaeological Institute in Bucharest, in co-operation with the Museum in Buzău, under the leadership of late dr. Gh. Diaconu (DIACONU, TZONY, CONSTANTINESCU, DRĂMBOCIANU 1977, 199-220). The search was interrupted for more than a decade and then it has been resumed in 1999, in co-operation with the "Dunărea de Jos" University in Galați (CONSTANTINESCU et alii 2001; 2001a; 2002).

The first discoveries belonging to the Dridu culture, made within the area of the archaeological site of Pietroasele, have been known since 1977. At that time, a bunch of brick makers extracting clay for their bricks from the bluff of the old *road under the hill*, touched and partially destroyed a half-buried dwelling, placed right on the spot the old road used to cross the path descending from Lower Pietroasa village, by the former distillery of the former agricultural co-operation association, on the spot known as *La Cuptoare – Cărămidărie* (fig. 1 A). The exact place is situated 0.6 km south of the village (CONSTANTINESCU 1999, 225). Three earthen pots have been partly re-constructed out of the materials picked during the search of the part of the dwelling which remained untouched by the brick makers (fig. 4/6-8). Ceramic fragments belonging to the same period, IX - XI centuries, have been discovered close by, at the southern end of the village, from the hay-field of the former agricultural co-operation association to the west, cross the road, to the back of the households of I. Văduva and Al. Petre (fig. 1 B).

Later on, other archaeological material has been gathered through surface research, mostly ceramics, which has been believed to belong to the Dridu Culture, from some places on the high but gentle slope of Istria

Hill, west of the Urgoaia stream, on the spots known as *La Tapu* and *Ville Frunzescu* (fig. 1 C).

Also, ceramic fragments and metal objects dated IX-XI centuries have been gathered from the south-western end of the village, within the area belonging to the households situated west of the road descending from the Upper Pietroasa, by the School, towards the mill and the Wine Centre (fig. 1 D).

During the research of the archaeological campaign in 2002 in the Administrative Sector of the Pietroasa Vinification and Viticulture Research Station (fig. 1 E), we have placed a section, called S VI, south of the hostel building surrounded by the tombs of the No 2 Necropolis belonging to Sântana de Mureş Culture (DIACONU, TZONY, CONSTANTINESCU, DRÂMBOCIANU 1977, 199-220, 207-208, fig. 5, 11; CONSTANTINESCU et alii 2001, 179-182; 2001a, 17-26; 2002, 235-237). The main archaeological unit discovered in this section is a complex for dwelling with a stone-made oven. The state of the ground only made possible the partial research of this complex.

Within the S VI section, sized 18.30 x 2.00 m and placed 9.60 m south and 3.55 m west of the south-eastern corner of the hostel building, a casing made of calcareous breach stone, slightly oval, appeared at 0.65 m deep in the ground. At 1.10 m from the surface of the ground, south and west of the stone casing, a complex with a very strongly settled grey/black earth filling came into sight. The filling contained several ceramic fragments, adobe fragments, coal, ashes, bones, small and medium-sized stones etc. In order to search this complex, I have placed a case sized 5.00 x 1.40 m. on the west side of the section (the dimensions were determined by the vicinity of several crops). Thus, I have been able to search the eastern side of the dwelling, sized 4.44 x 1.60/1.78 m (fig. 1.1), and with the long side of the unveiled surface having a north-south orientation. The dwelling belongs to the half-buried type and the depth of the hollow dug from the ancient stepping level was of 1.05-1.08 m. On the searched part, the south, east and north sides are straight, except for the north-eastern corner, where an oven was placed, made of quarry stone. On the south side there was a  $\varnothing 0.22$  m pole hole, half embedded into the clay wall, on the eastern side there were three pole holes and close to these – several  $\varnothing 0.06$ - $0.08$  m stake holes (fig 1.1). The floor was simple and made up of a layer of highly trodden brown-yellow clay; this seems to have been the clay on the floor of the hollow dug in order to settle the dwelling. The surface of the floor was continuous and evenly trodden, in spite of being slightly uneven. On the central longitudinal axis, 0.65 m from

the south wall, an alveola had been found, 8-10 cm deep and 0.30 m in diameter. The entrance of the dwelling has not been located within the area of the dug section.

In the north-eastern corner of the dwelling, an oven was found, made of quarry stone and sized 1.35 x 1.00 m. In order to place the oven, the builders extended that corner of the dwelling (fig 1.1). The walls of the oven were built out of large quarry stones, some of them even 0.35-0.40 m large, most of them especially chosen with a flat head in order to be placed vertically, as are placed the stones making up the first row at the basis of the oven; on top of those, other stones were placed, vertically but also horizontally, up to 0.45-0.55 m high, and then a vault was made in an ingenious way, by joining together medium sized stones and small split stones (fig. 1.3). Balls of yellow clay were found in between the vault stones, probably used to fasten those stones. Within the oven, large stones were found, fallen from the vault, and also small stones bearing obvious traces of burning, fragments of hearth adobe, some ceramic fragments, ashes and coal. The hearth did not take all the space of the oven bedplate and it was only poorly preserved on the east and north sides, but it extended very much out of the oven on its western side, where the opening of the oven was placed, also (fig. 1.2). The hearth was 4-5 cm thick inside the oven and 2-2.5 cm thick outside the oven; its structure contained a mixture of small but heavily burnt split stones. The hearth had been sleeked several times with fine clay layers laid one upon the other. The opening of the oven was closed with a stone plate, sized 0.35 x 0.37 x 0.16 m, found *in situ*; where this stone plate leaned, the hearth was *sinking/deepening* a few centimetres into the ground. Outside the oven, on the southern side, a surface was found looking like a hearth, but having no continuation with the actual hearth, with a shallow burnt surface of 6-8-10 mm thick. This could have been used either to deposit the ashes and embers removed from the oven on different occasions, or to occasionally function as a supplemental heath.

Ceramic fragments, iron and bone-made objects, metallic slag parts, bones from animals and birds - some of them fragmented - an animal canine tooth (possibly from a bear), several shells of gastropods, burnt stones, smaller or larger adobe fragments, ashes and coal were found within the filling of the dwelling and especially on its floor.

The ceramics consists in fragments worked with the fast wheel, in brick-coloured rough paste, some of them with a black core, and using the sand, the small stones or the crumbled chalk as a degreaser. Most of the fragments are decorated with strips of horizontal (fig. 2.1-4, 6), wave-

shaped (fig. 2. 7, 10-11; 3. 1) or combined lines (fig. 2. 5, 8; 3. 9). The fragments are parts of the brims of 11 different pots (fig. 3. 2-12), of four different bottoms of pots (fig. 2. 12-13), one is a fragment of a pot shoulder (fig. 2.10) and carries a trace of a handle, one is a fragment of a cylindrical pot neck (possibly a pitcher) made of yellow paste (fig. 2. 11); also, there have been found fragments of jars/earthenware, but also of smaller pots, with thin margins, possibly little cups. Two fragments have been crafted in shaggy paste, coloured in brown-grey and having as a secondary ingredient sand and small pieces of stone; they are decorated with broad strips of fine horizontal lines (fig. 2. 3-4). A few fragments are originated in pots crafted with the potter's wheel, in grey-brown or ash coloured paste, not decorated.

Inside the dwelling, three iron made objects were discovered: a fragment from a clamp with a square section (fig. 4. 1), a fragment from a small chisel (?) with a rectangular section (fig. 4. 2), and an arrow tip (?) with a tubular peduncle, only fragmentarily preserved (fig 4.3). Within the filling, seven pieces of dense iron slag were found. A bone-made object with a sharp tip (fig. 4. 4) was probably used to decorate the ceramics (?), and an object with two perforations on the upper side and having one side decorated with fine inclined incisions (fig. 4. 5) was made from a tubular bone with thin sides.

The presence of ceramics crafted with the fast wheel in the Pietroasele – Stațiune dwelling allows us to say this complex belongs to middle/second half of the 10th century.

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Within the neighbouring area, discoveries ascribed to belong to the Dridu Culture are known at Sărata Monteoru, on the left bank of the Sărata Stream, *at the foot of the Calugărului Hill* (ZAHARIA 1973, 17), at Breaza, on the Istrița Summit (CONSTANTINESCU 1999, 210; idem, 1996, 194, pl. XXXVI), at Clondiru de Sus (CONSTANTINESCU 1999, 213), Dealu Viei (*Ibidem*, 214), Izvoru Dulce - Merei (*Ibid.*, 220), Lipia (*Ibid.*, 221), Ulmeni - Movila lui Retesan (fig 4.9) (CONSTANTINESCU 1994, 165-177), Săhăteni (CONSTANTINESCU 1999, 229), Săsenii Vechi (*Ibidem*, 229) and, within a larger spreading area, this kind of discoveries is known within the borders of the Buzău County (OBERLÄNDER-TÂRNOVEANU, CONSTANTINESCU 1994, 317, 332-333; CONSTANTINESCU 1999, 211), at Mlăjeț – Nehoiu, (TROHANI, POPOVICI 1986, 20), Nuciu – Bozioru (ȘTEFAN 1986, 18-20), Potârnichești – Poșta Călnău (CONSTANTINESCU 1999,

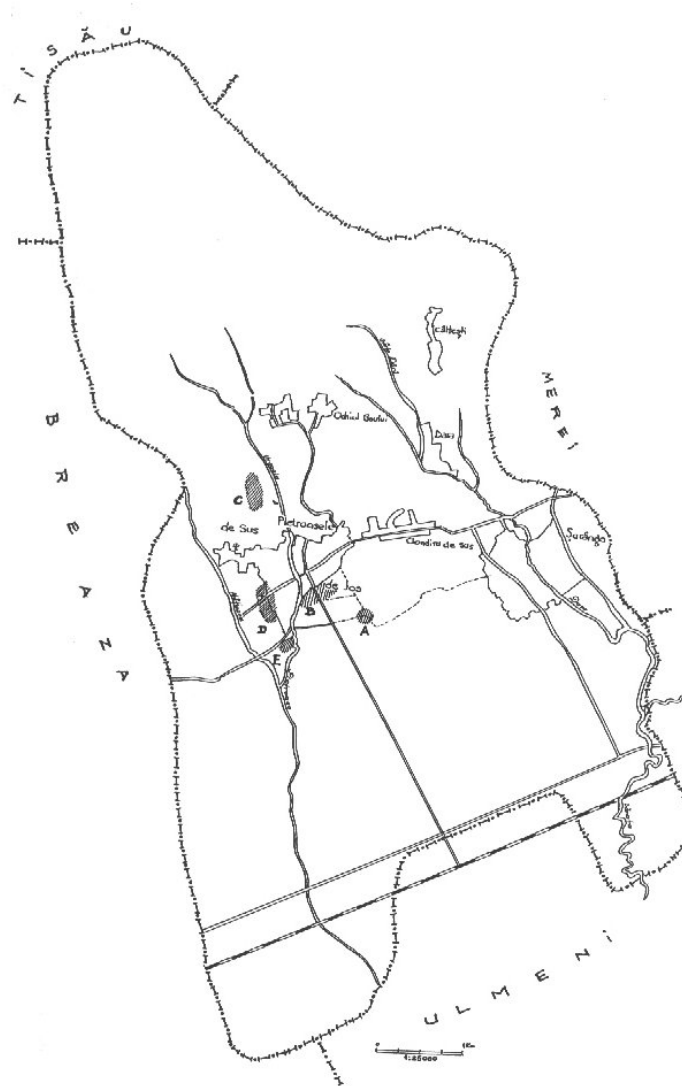
227), Vadu Sorești (DRĂMBOCIANU 1993, 469-478), Cioranca–Movila Banului (CONSTANTINESCU 1999, 213), Gherăseni (*Ibidem*, 218), Sudiți – Gherăseni (*Ibid.*, 231), Moșica – Smeeni (*Ibid.*, 224), Homești (*Ibid.*, 219), Costieni (*Ibid.*, 214), Sălcioara (*Ibid.*, 229) etc.

As noticed, the bearers of the Dridu culture in the northeastern part of Wallachia occupied all the relief forms, from the high areas at the foot of the Curvature Carpathian Mountains – the dwelling at Mlăjeț-Nehoiu, to the ones in the Subcarpathian Hills – the dwelling complexes at Nucu-Bozioru, Vadu Sorești, Homești, Sărăta Monteoru, Dealu Viei, Izvoru Dulce-Merei, Pietroasele, Breaza, Clondiru de Sus, Potârnichești-Poșta Călnău, Sășenii Vechi, up to the field areas, where the complexes at Cioranca, Gherăseni, Sudiți-Gherăseni, Ulmeni, Lipia, Moșica-Smeeni, Săhăteni, Buzău, Sălcioara, Costieni have been spotted.

Many of these settlements have been superposed upon or are in the vicinity of dwellings from the previous period of time, centuries VI-VII, taking over and carrying on a natural process of capitalizing the natural environment and the riches of the area. The concentration of the dwellings suggests the existence *also* in the region of Buzău of a social and economic structure which advanced from the union of communes - *popular romanies* = *romaniile populare* (IORGA 1984, 30) - to a structure with a pre-State politics and military character, country-like or territory-like. This new structure generated the frame which was needed for the development of the production and exchange economical activities, which insured the social evolution during the conclusion stage of the process of formation of the Romanian people and of the Romanian language. Within this frame, the debut of the old Romanian Dridu-type civilization was produced, at the same time as the affirmation of the old Romanian population in the space north of the Danube River. On this structure, the supposed Country of Buzău / Țara Buzăului evolved (GIURESCU 1977, 83) and, together with the Country of Vrancea / Țara Vrancei (principality) (COMȘA 1987, 39-44), the Territory Tigheci-Fălciu, a Country of Teleajen and Prahova (COMȘA 1978, 303-317) were the main social and political structures that functioned here, at the Curvature of the Carpathians, up until the formation of the state-type formations Țara Românească/Wallachia and Moldova.

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Pl.1. 1 A – at the Brickyard; B - South of the village; D – West of the village; E – at the Wine Centre in Pietroasa –administrative sector

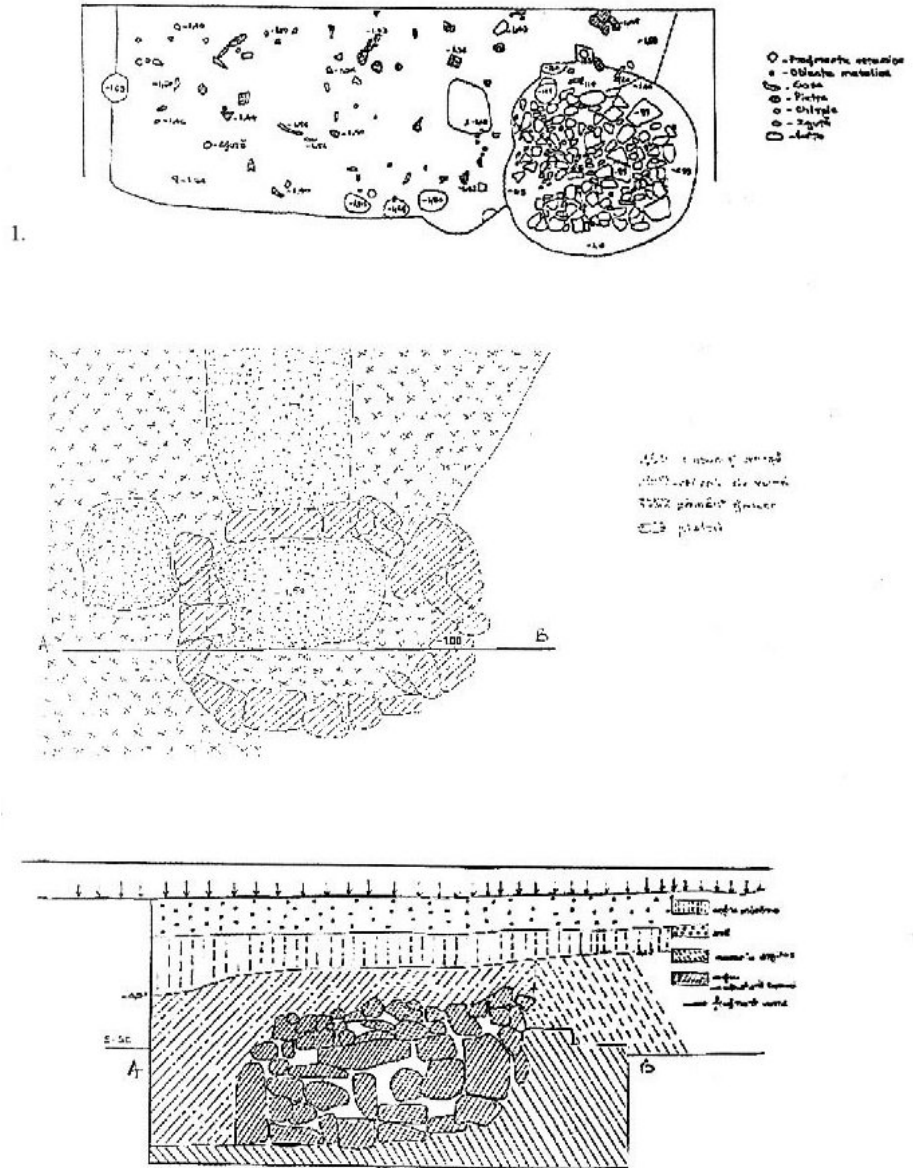


Fig. 1. 1 – Plan of the dwelling; 2 – Plan of the oven;  
3 – Profile of the oven



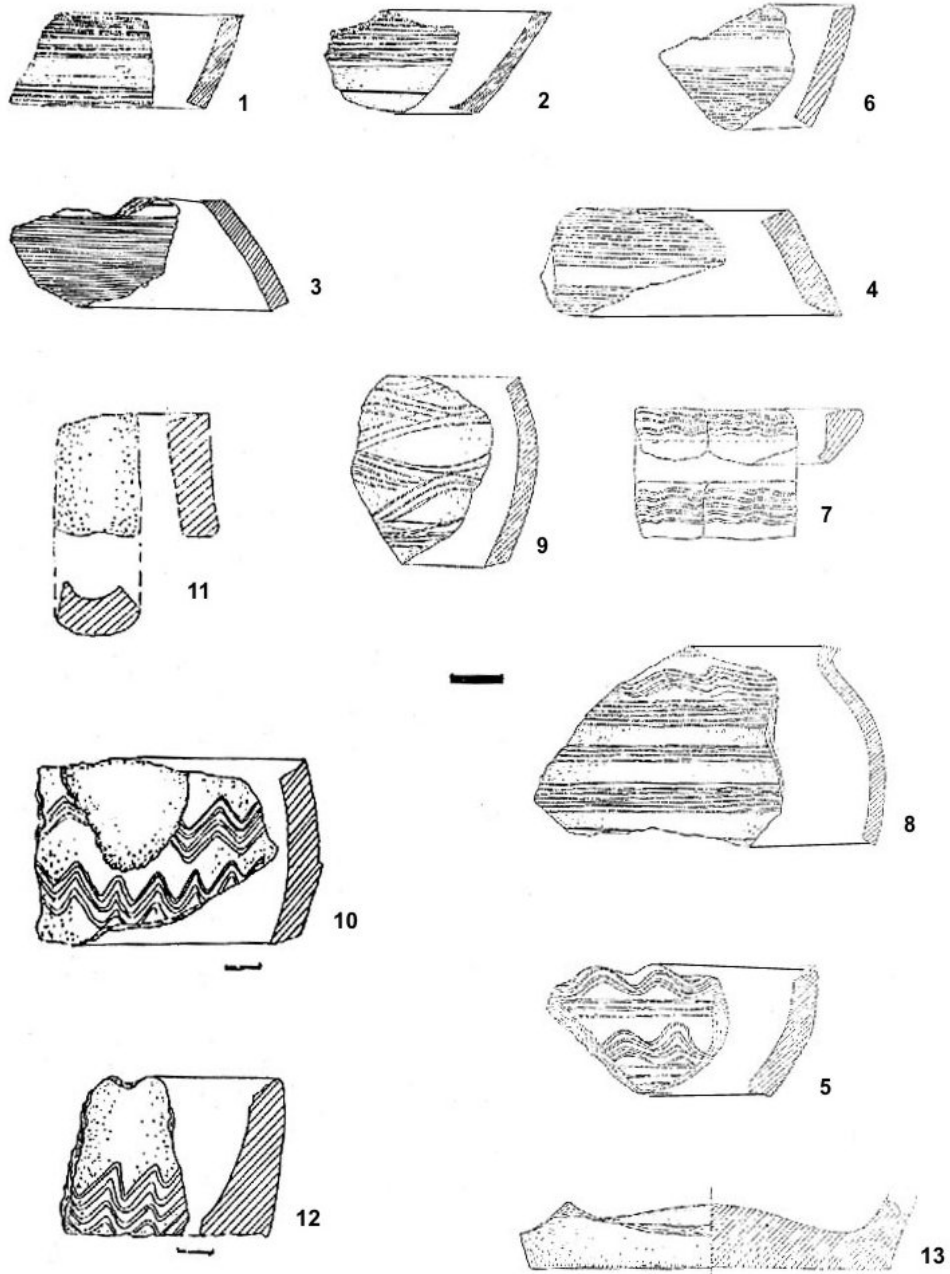


Fig. 2. Pietroasele. Ceramics inside the dwelling 1.

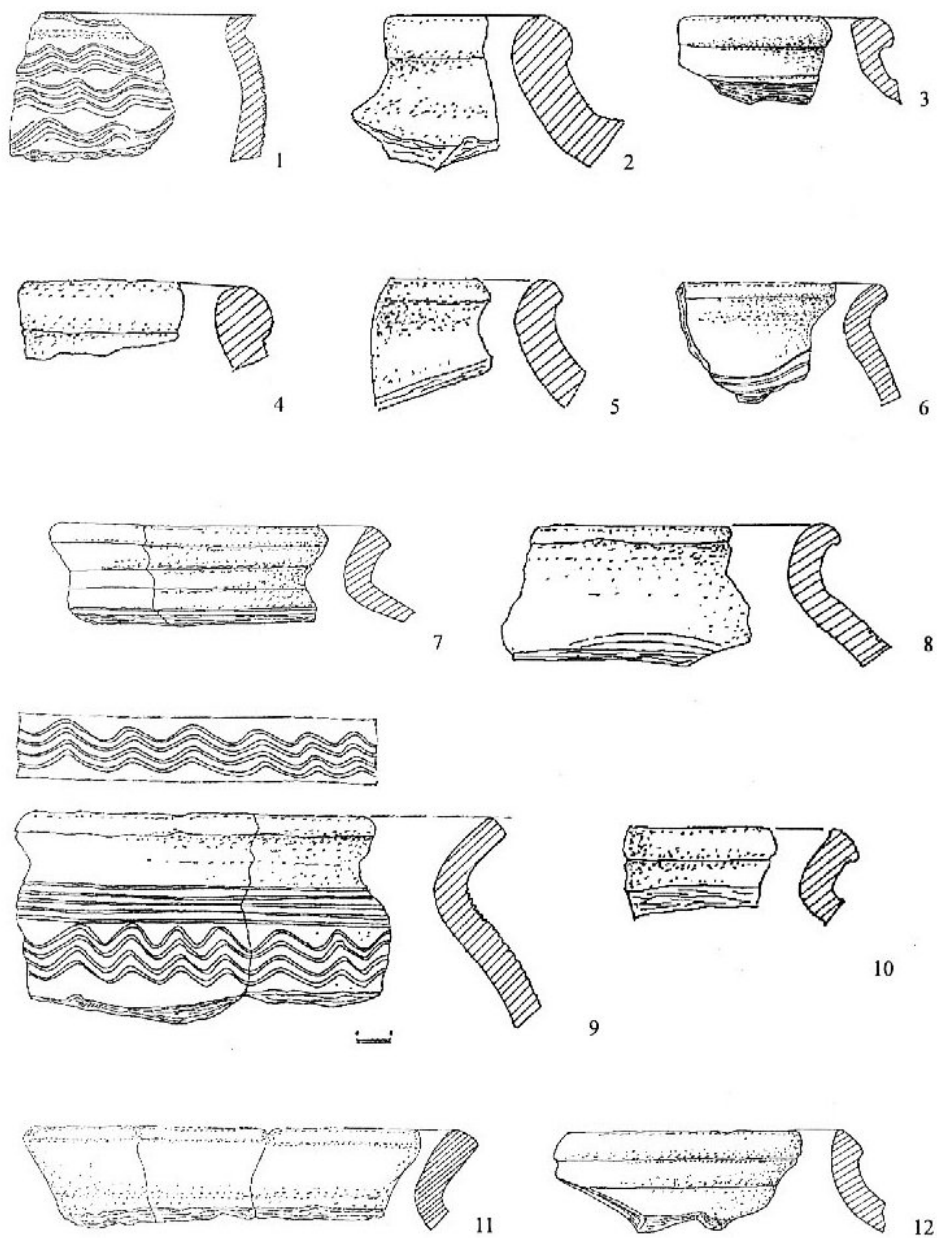


Fig.3. 1 – fragment of a pot body; 2-12 – brims (fragments)

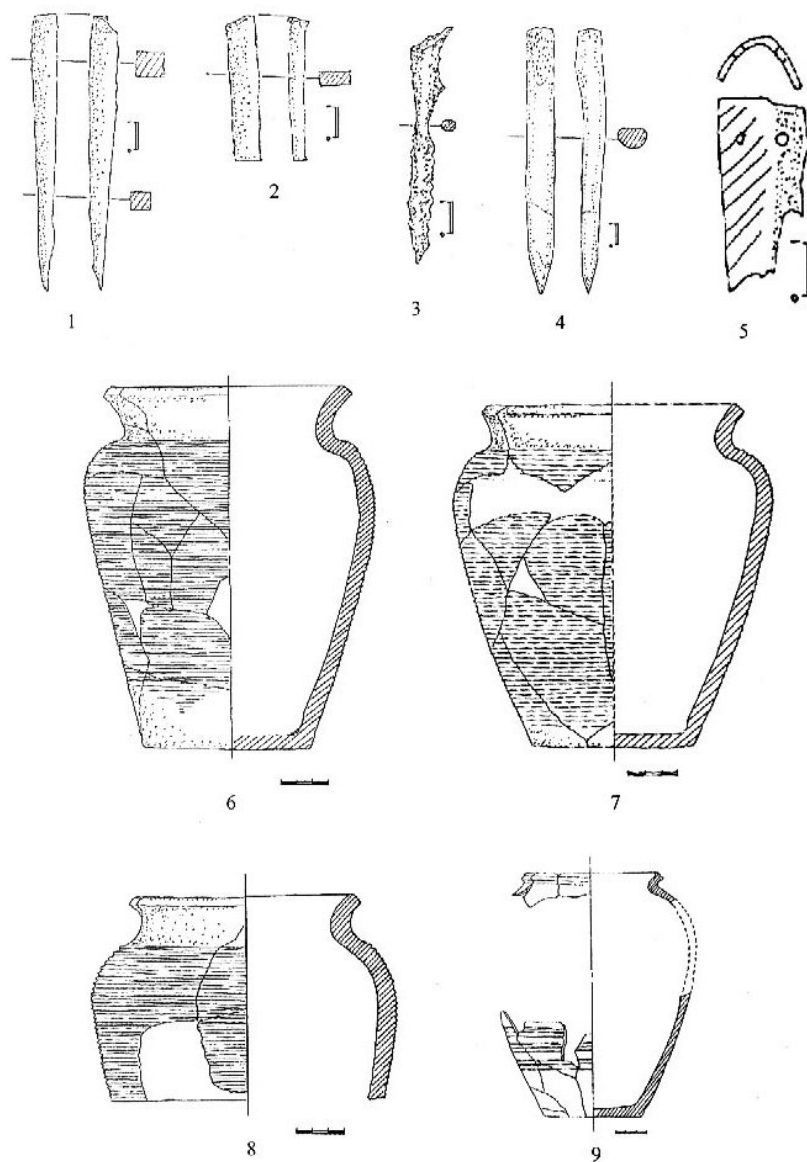


Fig. 4. 1-5 Objects in the inventory of the dwelling; 6-8 Pots in the dwelling from the Brickyard spot; 9 – Pot at Ulmeni-Movila lui Retesan.