

## Clay Objects from the Chalcolithic Settlement of Cucuteni -Dâmbul Morii (Iasi County, Romania)

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**Abstract.** *The archaeological research carried out at Dâmbul Morii settlement led to the discovery of 15 dwellings. In their inventory, 30 pieces identified were made of clay. All artifacts that were not plastic representations were included in this category. In this study, we want to make a presentation of these artifacts, and the context of the discovery, to give us a picture of their functionality. Unfortunately, this task is hampered by the low number and fragmented state of the pieces. The artefacts discovered at Dambul Morii can be classified in the category of household items (clay weights, spindle whorls, clay balls, clay tokens), as well as ornament items (beads, clay disc, en violon idol, amulets, etc.). Some of them can also be used in some ritual activities, such as amulets, or clay balls, or for other purposes.*

**Rezumat.** *Cercetările arheologice de la Dâmbul Morii au dus la identificarea a cel puțin 15 locuințe. In inventarul acestora au fost identificate și 30 de piese realizate din lut. În această categorie erau incluse toate artefactele care nu erau reprezentări plastice. In studiul de față dorim să facem o prezentare a acestor artefacte, și contextul descoperirii pentru a ne face o imagine asupra funcționalității lor. Din nefericire această sarcina este îngreunată de numărul scăzut și starea fragmentară a pieselor. Piese descoperite la Dâmbul Morii pot fi încadrate în categoria obiectelor casnice (greutăți, fusaiole, bile, jetoane), precum și a obiectelor de podoabă (mărgele, disc de lut, idol en violon, amulete). Unele dintre ele pot fi utilizate și în unele activități rituale, asemenea amuletelor, eventual și a bilelor de lut, sau in alte scopuri.*

**Keywords:** *Dâmbul Morii, clay objects, clay weights, spindle whorls, clay tokens*

### Introduction

The Cucutenian communities used other objects besides weapons, ceramics, plastic, and cult objects in their practical and spiritual activities. These pieces represent clear evidence of the practice of domestic and community activities at the level of the settlement. Some researchers include in this category practically all materials that were not plastic representations<sup>2</sup>. Among the objects considered in this study, we list spindle whorls, clay weights, clay balls, and so-called clay tokens, as well as a series of objects that could be considered adornments.

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<sup>2</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 161; MELNICIUC 2011, 133; BEM 2007, 179.

The settlement at *Dambul Morii*<sup>3</sup> was first mentioned by H. Schmidt, under the name „Talsiedlung - the settlement in the Valley". The German scholar also conducted a small control survey in the western part of the settlement<sup>4</sup> without making significant discoveries or leaving a plan of excavation. The research carried out in the 1961-1962 campaigns have identified the ditch, but it appears to be limited to a 5-6x2 m area<sup>5</sup>. The settlement from *Dâmbul Morii* is located northeast of Romania (Fig. 1/A), Iasi County (Fig. 1/B), on the territory of Cucuteni commune, Băiceni village (Fig. 1/C), on a promontory positioned between the Recea stream to the west and the Morii stream to the east, with steeper slopes to the southeast and smoother on the other sides<sup>6</sup>.

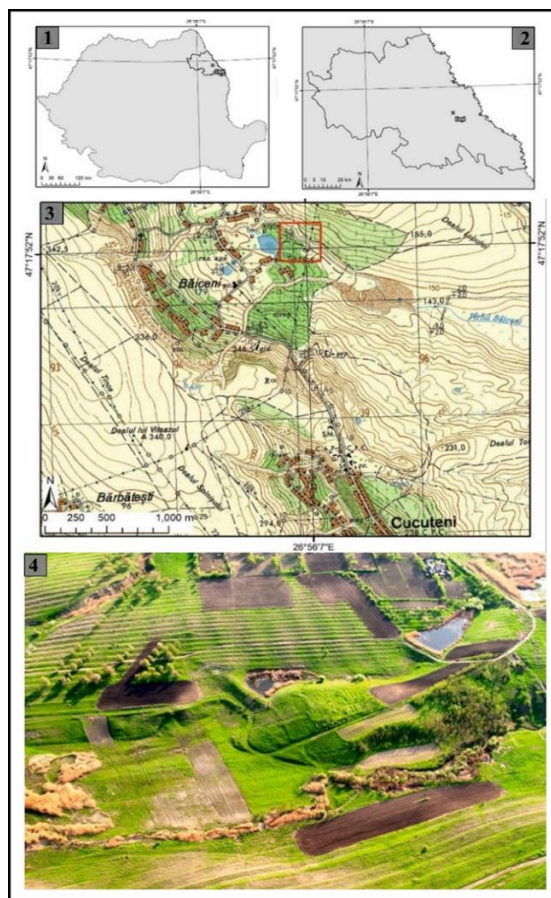


Figure. 1. Site location of Cucuteni - *Dâmbul Morii*. Iași County (1-2), and on the topographic map, Scale 1:25000(3); Oblique aerial photography from the ENE( 4) (after Asăndulesei 2020, Fig. 1,7).

<sup>3</sup> In some studies, the settlement is also known as Cucuteni-Băiceni - *Dâmbul Morii* or Băiceni - *Dâmbul Morii*.

<sup>4</sup> SCHMIDT 1932, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> DINU 2006, 31; 2009, 106.

<sup>6</sup> DINU 2006, 31; 2009, 106; ASĂNDULESEI et alii. 2020, 320; BALAUR 2020, 170.

During the eight excavation campaigns (1961-1964, 1965, 1977-1978 and 1989), under the leadership of Marin Dinu, 10 Cucuteni A-B dwellings and the defensive system of the settlement were identified and investigated<sup>7</sup>. After a careful consultation of excavation plans and site notebooks the number of partially or fully investigated dwellings increased to 15<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 2).

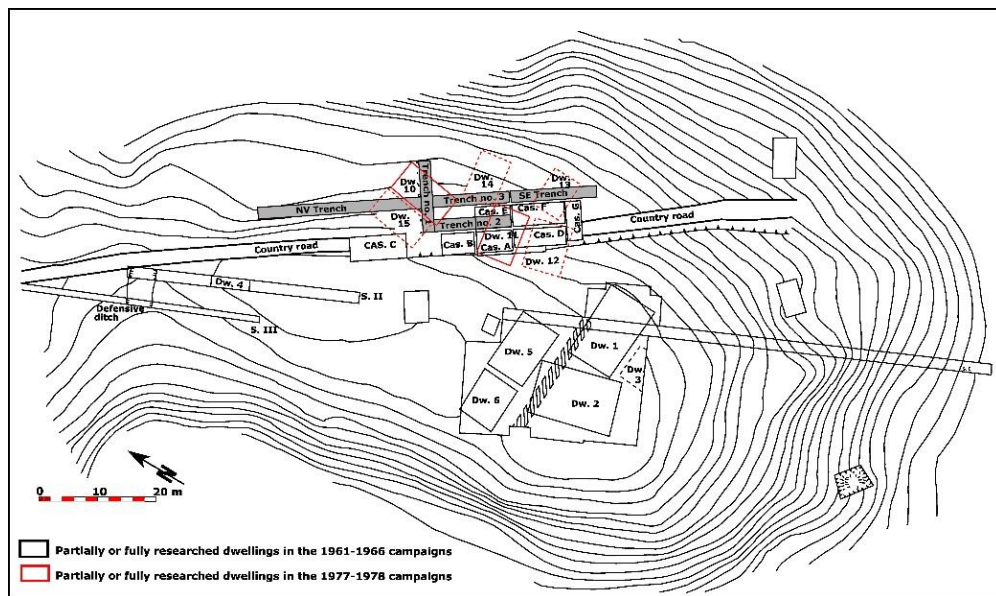


Figure. 2. Cucuteni – Dâmbul Morii . Excavation plan (adapted after Dinu 2006, 43, with additions).

The clay objects that were discovered at *Dambul Morii* settlement will be the topic of our discussion. In the eight excavation campaigns, in different contexts, 30 pieces of clay artefact were identified, representing different types of tools such as clay weights, spindle whorls, balls or clay projectiles, a clay disc, and a miniature clay axe, etc. Also, two pieces there were discovered that we failed to fit into the categories mentioned above. These objects were made from a clay paste of poor quality, or a carefully purified paste, having a composition of fine sand. These were subjected to low-quality firings, as in the case of clay weights, which allowed the absorption of moisture, thus becoming brittle, or a firing in an oxidizing environment<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> DINU 2009, 106-107; ASĂNDULESEI A., et alii 2020, 324.

<sup>8</sup> BALAUR 2023, 71.

<sup>9</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101; MELNICIUC 2011 133.

## Household objects

### Clay weights

The first category of tools under discussion concerns the clay weights. These pieces were usually made from a coarser paste mixed with sand, chaff, or fine chamotte, burned brick or light brown. They are found in various forms. The first is the truncated one with a right base, narrower or rounded, or a more robust pyramidal body. In both cases they were perforated at the upper part. The second shape encountered is the round one, with a 7-10 cm in diameter, perforated centrally and slightly flattened. In some cases, these pieces have two incisions on either side of the body, from the hole to the nearest edge, most likely the result of their use, hanging from the fibers. Their weight was sufficient to determine the printing of these fibers in the clay, probably not very burnt<sup>10</sup>. As for the size of these pieces, they were divided into two categories: large pieces (those of the pyramid, ovoid, circular, and flattened form), and medium and small-sized pieces, with predominantly bitronconic or circular shapes<sup>11</sup>.

The functionality of these pieces was diverse. In some cases, they served to stretch the warp yarns, when weaving at vertical loom, thinner or thicker canvases, or knitting mats, in the case of medium and small pieces. Also, according to the researchers, in the case of circular clay weights, for fishing nets<sup>12</sup>.

Unfortunately, the number of clay weights in the A-B phase settlements is very small, either due to a lack of research or due to the perishability of the material used (clay), which, after an insufficient burn, has degraded<sup>13</sup>. Near the settlement of *Dâmbul Morii* similar clay weights, truncated or pyramidal, were discovered at Cucuteni – *Cetățuia* in Cucuteni A-B and B levels<sup>14</sup> and Buznea – *Siliște*<sup>15</sup> or circular in Cucuteni – *Cetățuia*<sup>16</sup>, Giurgești<sup>17</sup> and Buznea<sup>18</sup>.

At *Dâmbul Morii*, too, few such pieces were discovered. All the pieces in question were discovered in dwelling no 5. Here we have two circular, flattened weights, a whole one (Fig. 3/1) and a fragmentary one (fig. 3/2), both with a diameter of about 12 cm, a trapezoidal weight, with a ellipsoidal base, kept on a height of about 10.6 cm (Fig. 3/3), and fragments from other circular weights (Fig. 3/4).

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<sup>10</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101; MELNICIUC, 2011 135; BEM 2007, 179.

<sup>11</sup> BEM 2007, 179, fig. 44/7, 392/1-14, 393/1-6; MELNICIUC, 2011 135.

<sup>12</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101.

<sup>13</sup> MELNICIUC 2011 135.

<sup>14</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101; SCHMIDT 1932, 67, fig. 36/4.

<sup>15</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101, fig. 59/6, 9-10; 61/48-49.

<sup>16</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101, fig. 59/2; 60/3-4, 8; SCHMIDT 1932, 67.

<sup>17</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101, fig. 59/1.

<sup>18</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101, 60/3-4, 8.



Figure 3. Clay weights from dwelling no 5 from *Dâmbul Morii*.

### Spindle whorls

The spindle whorls attest to the practice of the craft of processing of fibers of animal or vegetable nature within the prehistoric communities. As a rule, they were made of a carefully cleaned paste, having fine sand in its composition. The combustion was carried out in an oxidizing environment, thus gaining gray colors, brick to red or brown-brick, or burned in a reducing environment, getting lighter or darker gray colors<sup>19</sup>. There is also the opinion that these pieces were made of broken ceramic fragments, which were then sanded until a circle

<sup>19</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101; MELNICIUC, 2011 133; PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA, VĂLEANU 2004, 147.

was made, later perforated with a flint tip<sup>20</sup>. They are found in various forms, conical or bitronconic, symmetrical or asymmetrical, elongated or flattened, perforated straight or slightly concave, as well as plan-discoidal, flattened resembling perforated discs. Some of them had a decor that included incised motifs, potholes, notches, and other features<sup>21</sup>. Among the different types of spindles whorles discovered, we mention those from Hăbășești<sup>22</sup>, Cucuteni – *Cetățuia*<sup>23</sup>, Giurgești<sup>24</sup>, Ruginoasa<sup>25</sup>, Buznea<sup>26</sup>, clear evidence that these communities spun animal and vegetable fibers, obtaining threads for weaving and knitting<sup>27</sup>.

Also, in this case their number is low, and unfortunately the pieces discovered very fragmentary. The six pieces discovered at *Dâmbul Morii* were part of the category of bitronconic (Fig. 4/2, 6) and circular (fig. 4/1, 4, 5) spindles whorles, with widths ranging from 2.5 to 4.2 cm, respectively, and heights between 2.2 and 3.8 cm. Regarding the context of the discovery, two pieces each come from dwelling no 2 (Fig. 4/1, 3), investigated in the 1963 campaign, and dwelling no 11 (Fig. 4/2, 5), investigated in the 1978 campaign, one artefact in dwelling no 13 (Fig. 4/6), identified in the 1977 campaign, and another artifact discovered under the platform of a dwelling, without specifying exactly which one, researched in the 1978 campaign.

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<sup>20</sup> BEM 2007, 179, fig. 393/9-11, 13-14.

<sup>21</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101; MELNICIUC, 2011 133.

<sup>22</sup> DUMITRESCU 1954, 267, fig. 27/1-15; 28/1-14; BOGHIAN 2004, fig. 61/1-29.

<sup>23</sup> PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚA, VĂLEANU 2004, 147-148, fig. 68/1-14.; SCHMIDT 1932, 67, fig. 16; BOGHIAN 2004, fig. 61/34-36, 41-43.

<sup>24</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, fig. 61/30-33; 37-40; 44-47.

<sup>25</sup> LAZAROVICI, LAZAROVICI, 2012, fig. VIII/29.7.

<sup>26</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101, fig. 59/11; 60/5-7.

<sup>27</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 101.

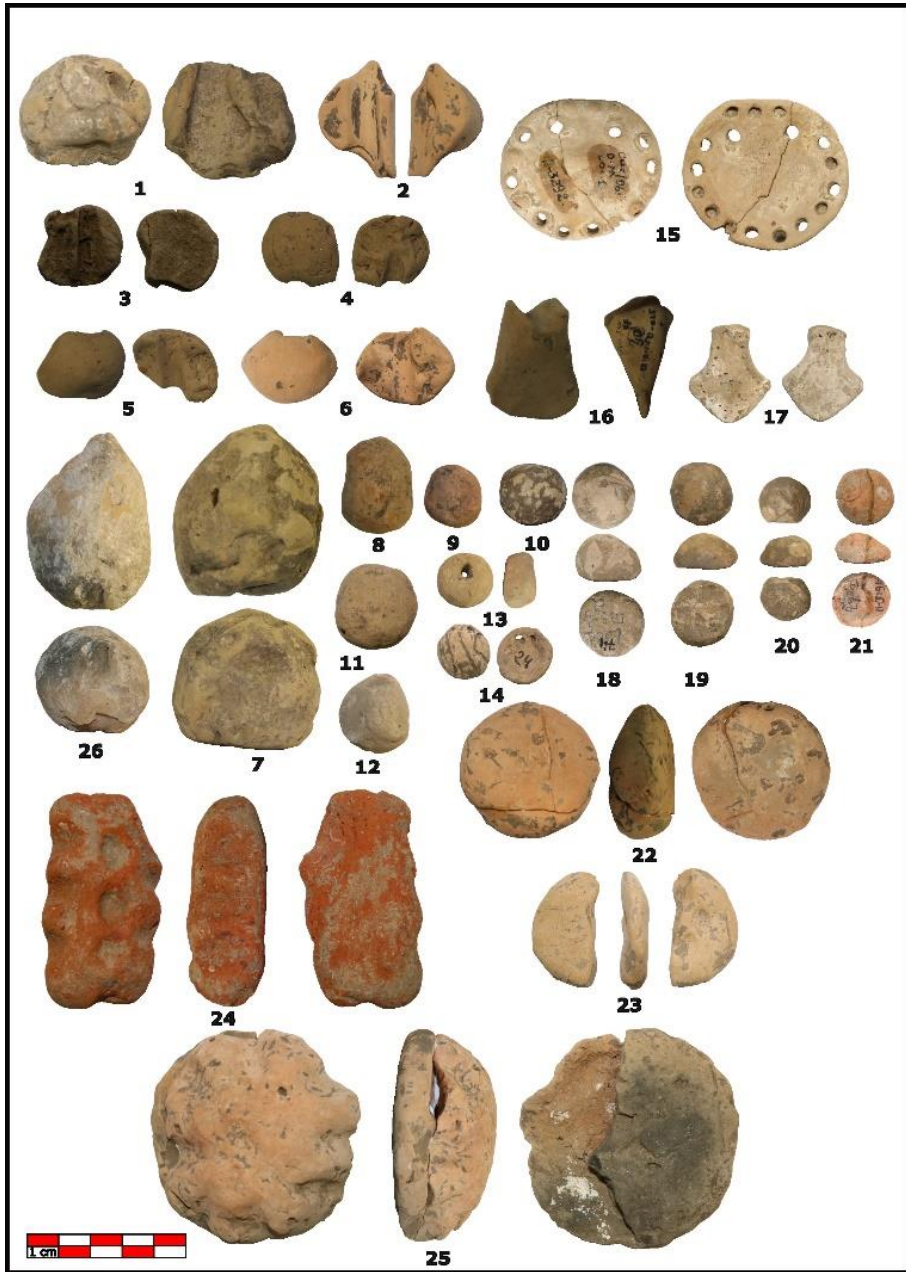


Figure 4. Clay objects discovered at *Dâmbul Morii*. 1-6 spindle whorles; 7-12, 26, clay projectiles; 13-14 beads; 15. Clay disc; 16 miniature clay axe; 17 en violon idol; 18-21 clay tokens; 22-23 clay tiles; 24-25 clay objects of unknown use. Context of discovery: 12, 15, 21 dwelling no. 1; 1, 3, 17, 25-26 dwelling no. 2; 10, 23 dwelling no. 5; 7-9 dwelling no 6; 16 dwelling no 10; 2, 5, 18 dwelling no 11; 6 dwelling no 13; 4, 11, 22 under the platform of an unspecified dwelling from the 1978 campaign; 14, 19, 20, 24 unspecified context from the 1977 and 1978 campaigns; 13 cas 1E, 1989 campaign.

## Clay balls

In the category of clay objects, clay balls or projectiles, are also included. Usually, they were spherical, non-perforated or only with a beginning of perforation, with different diameters, about 2-6 cm. As for functionality, opinions are divided. They are considered by some researchers children's toys or beads in the early stage of manufacturing<sup>28</sup>, or slingshot projectiles<sup>29</sup>. The defensive function of clay balls is contested by some researchers, based on the fact that these pieces had a low strength and resistance to impact, but also the fact that they were made of a light and friable material<sup>30</sup>. The possibility of having been used in some cult practices is also not excluded, as suggested by the discoveries from Vorniceni, where, such small clay balls were placed in the so-called "vessels with a threshold" together with anthropomorphic statuettes<sup>31</sup>. Also, some researchers consider the clay balls with perforations to be more likely beads<sup>32</sup>.

Such artefacts are currently mentioned in the settlements of Cucuteni-Cetatuie, phases A-B and B<sup>33</sup>, Hăbăsești<sup>34</sup>, Drăguseni – Ocoale<sup>35</sup> or Vorniceni<sup>36</sup>. At *Dambul Morii*, seven such pieces were discovered (Fig. 4/7-12, 26), four with approximately circular shape (Fig. 4/9-12), with diameters ranging from 1.8 to 2.5 cm, and a slightly elongated one (Fig. 4/8). Two of them (Fig. 4/7, 26) are different from the rest of the clay balls discovered by having approximately double dimensions. The artefacts under discussion were discovered in dwelling no 6, three clay balls (Fig. 4/7-9), one in each of the dwellings no 1 (fig. 4/12), no 2 (fig. 4/26), and no 5 (Fig. 4/10), and another discovered under the platform of a dwelling investigated in the 1978 campaign, without specifying which one (Fig. 4/11).

## Clay tokens

Apart from the above mentioned clay artefacts, we also know some objects whose utility is difficult to specify, namely the so-called clay tokens. In the Near East such pieces were used in temples, altars, ritual deposition, or were considered protective or blessing amulets<sup>37</sup>. At *Dambul Morii* four such pieces of clay tokens were discovered (Fig. 4/18-21), with circular base, and diameters ranging from 1.6 to 2 cm with a height of about 1 and 1.5 cm. These objects

<sup>28</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 162; SCHMIDT 1932, 68; DUMITRESCU 1954, 459, fig. 48/5-6, 8-9, 12.

<sup>29</sup> CRÎȘMARU 1977, 97; BOGHIAN 2004, 102.

<sup>30</sup> MELNICIUC 2011, 135.

<sup>31</sup> MELNICIUC 2011, 135-136

<sup>32</sup> SZTANCSUJ 2015, 198.

<sup>33</sup> SCHMIDT 1932, 68.

<sup>34</sup> DUMITRESCU 1954, Fig. 150/9, 17.

<sup>35</sup> MELNICIUC 2011, 135-136, fig. 44/1; CRÎȘMARU 1977, 97.

<sup>36</sup> MELNICIUC 2011, 135-136.

<sup>37</sup> PALKA 2021, 414.



are interpreted by specialists either as schematic anthropomorphic representations or game pieces, either they give to these objects a cult character<sup>38</sup>.

### Objects of adornment

The beauty is not only manifested by the manner of decorating the various pieces discovered in the Cucuteni communities, but also by the presence of ornaments, made of different materials. The first category of artefacts considered refers to clay beads. They were made from a better quality paste, burned to red or brown. Also they are found in different forms, such as elongated cylindrical, perforated centrally or slightly laterally, as is the case at Hăbășești<sup>39</sup>, Cucuteni – *Cetățuia*<sup>40</sup> and Giurgești<sup>41</sup>, biconic and conical, like those at Cucuteni – *Cetățuia*<sup>42</sup> or Hăbășești<sup>43</sup>, or spherical and flattened spherical, like those discovered in Hăbășești<sup>44</sup> or Cucuteni – *Cetățuia* and *Dâmbul Morii*<sup>45</sup>. Other discoveries of this kind were found at Târpești, level A<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>2</sub><sup>46</sup>, Trușești<sup>47</sup>, Drăgușeni<sup>48</sup> or Scânteia<sup>49</sup>. At *Dâmbul Morii*, the existence of "clay rings" is also mentioned, but considering their size, the researchers rather believe that they are also beads<sup>50</sup>.

In addition to the above mentioned piece, considered clay ring, at *Dâmbul Morii* a single bead (fig. 4/13) was discovered, in the 1989 campaign. It had a circular shape, slightly flattened, with a diameter of 1.8 cm and a width of about 1 cm, perforated in the upper part.

The discovery from dwelling no 10 can also be included in this category of decorative items. It is a small disk, with a diameter of about 1.7 cm, provided with two mounting holes, with an incised decoration on the concave side (Fig. 4/14). The author of the discovery considered this piece rather an amulet or an idol<sup>51</sup>. There is also the opinion that this type of piece may rather represent a button<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> SZTANCSUJ 2015, 194.

<sup>39</sup> DUMITRESCU 1954, 456, fig. 43/10, 15-17, 22-23; BOGHIAN 2004, 161, fig. 157/19, 21, 31, 32, 37-38.

<sup>40</sup> SCHMIDT 1932, 68, fig. 18/d-f, pl. 35/9, 10; BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>41</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>42</sup> SCHMIDT 68, fig. 18/b, c, e, pl. 35/6, 7; BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>43</sup> DUMITRESCU 1954, 456, fig. 43/14; BOGHIAN 2004, 161, fig. 157/20.

<sup>44</sup> DUMITRESCU 1954, fig. 43/12-13, 18-21, 25-28; BOGHIAN 2004, 161, fig. 157/34-36, 43, 53-54.

<sup>45</sup> SCHMIDT, 1932, 68-69, fig. 18/g, h, pl. 35/7, 8; BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>46</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>47</sup> PETRESCU-DÎMBOVITA, FLORESCU, FLORESCU, 1999, 540, fig. 381/9; BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>48</sup> MARINESCU-BÎLCU, BOLOMEY 2000, 151, fig. 178/37, 179/12; BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>49</sup> MANTU, ȚURCANU 1999, nr. 375-382 din catalog; BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>50</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 161.

<sup>51</sup> Cucuteni – Baiceni – *Dâmbul Morii* – Carnet de săpătură 3. Campania din 1977.

<sup>52</sup> SZTANCSUJ 2015, 189.

The second category under discussion refers to clay discs. Most of the time they represent copies of similar pieces of gold, similar to those discovered at la Brad<sup>53</sup> or copper discs at Habasesti<sup>54</sup> or Cărbuna<sup>55</sup>. Such clay discs have also been discovered at Cucuteni - Cetatuiă<sup>56</sup>, Scânteia<sup>57</sup> or Draguseni<sup>58</sup>.

The piece from *Dambul Morii* (Fig. 4/15), discovered in the 1961 campaign, in dwelling no 1, differs from those mentioned above by its decoration and form. The convex disc, measuring 5.2 cm in diameter, had total or partial perforations on the edge, most likely made from the inside out. In the central area, it has two perforations, probably mounting holes. We mention that in the area of the two mounting holes the disc was slightly flattened. This piece seems rather to have played the role of amulet, if we take into account the two perforations in the central area.

Another type of object discussed in this category is the *en violon* idols. These plastic pieces are usually flat, being made of clay. The paste from which they were made was well purified and burnt brick-red or brick-brown. There are two variants of such pieces, simple, only sketched, with perforations in place of the eyes, having the shape of a violin box with the head and body rounded, and complex, which drew some anatomical details and decorative elements, especially the stitches that mimic the technique *au repousse*. The decoration is also individualized for each piece, varying from simple punctures, arranged either around the head and body, in a single row or in two rows, as observed in the case of two discoveries from Hăbășești<sup>59</sup>, or on the whole dorsal surface, as in the case of some specimens from Hăbășești<sup>60</sup> and Cucuteni - Cetățuia<sup>61</sup>. The fact that there have been no duplicate pieces discovered so far demonstrates the unique character and uniqueness of each idol in its own way<sup>62</sup>.

The piece discovered at *Dâmbul Morii* (Fig. 4/17), in the 1963 campaign, in dwelling no 2, falls into the category of complex pieces in terms of shape and decoration. It shows a string of punctures all around the body and head, most likely with two unfinished perforations in the head area, representing the eyes. In the body area, the decoration consists of a circle of incised dots, the center of the circle being marked by another incised dot. On the other hand, this piece has no decoration<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> URSACHI 2012, 4, fig. 26

<sup>54</sup> DUMITRESCU 1954, Fig. 41/1.

<sup>55</sup> DERGACEV 2016, 183-184; Pl. VIII.

<sup>56</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 159; SCHMIDT 1932, 69, pl. 37, 6 sus.

<sup>57</sup> MANTU, ȚURCANU 1999, 125, piesa 275.

<sup>58</sup> MARINESCU-BÎLCU, BOLOMEY 2000, fig. 178/2, 179/14, 27.

<sup>59</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 147; DUMITRESCU 1954, fig. 146/6-7.

<sup>60</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 147; DUMITRESCU 1954, fig. 146/12.

<sup>61</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 147; SCHMIDT 1932, fig. 33/6.

<sup>62</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 147.

<sup>63</sup> BALAU 2021, 383, Fig. 6.1.

### Miniature clay axe

The miniature clay models reproduce, in a miniaturized, more naturalistic or schematized form, different categories of neolithic and neolithic weapons and tools made of stone, copper and, perhaps, bone. These pieces are linked, according to the researchers, to some cults of sacralisation of objects<sup>64</sup>.

Among the pieces of this kind discovered, we mention the 21 miniature models and a single, fragmentary, normal-sized specimen from Hăbăşeşti<sup>65</sup>, or Târpeşti, Cucuteni A<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>2</sub> level<sup>66</sup>, Drăguşeni<sup>67</sup> or the two pieces from Rugionoaia<sup>68</sup>. These were considered either votive pieces or amulets, with the aim of ensuring the strength and health of those who possessed and wore them, or symbols of "craft" and even signs of power, if we consider the fact that copper axes also had this destination, marking the social and religious hierarchy. Nor the possibility that these pieces are models of metallurgical artisans for copper pieces or templates for patterns in the case of natural-sized artifacts, given their realistic modeling is not excluded. Pieces of this kind were made of a semi-fine paste, with crushed shards in the composition, fired to a brick-red or gray-brown color<sup>69</sup>.

The fragmentary piece from *Dâmbul Morii* (Fig. 4/16), which only has 4 cm of its original size, was discovered during the 1977 campaign in dwelling no 10 at a depth of 0.25 m. It is probable that the axe had two cross-edges with a transverse hole that were made from a brick paste. As for the cutting edge, it was slightly arched, widened on one side<sup>70</sup>.

### Various objects

Among the clay pieces discovered at *Dâmbul Morii* we can include the so-called clay tiles. There are two such objects (Fig. 4/22-23), one complete and the other fragmentary. They are round or oval in shape, and made of a semi-fine paste. The whole piece was about 4.5 cm in diameter and about 2 cm thick. The second piece had a diameter of about 3.7 cm and a thickness of about 1 cm. Such pieces were discovered in settlements such as Cucuteni, Scânteia, Ghelâieşti - *Nedeia*<sup>71</sup>.

At *Dâmbul Morii*, two other clay artefacts seem to be interesting. The first piece under discussion is a brick-red clay artefact with dimensions of 7x3.8x2.5 cm (Fig. 4/24). It is flat on the dorsal side and has circular impressions on the other side. The second artifact (Fig. 4/25), light brown in color, had a circular shape, with a diameter of about 6.5 cm and a height of 3.6

<sup>64</sup> ENEA 2013, 89.

<sup>65</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 159 fig. 157/1-5, 11-14, 22-27, 39-41, 48-5; DUMITRESCU 1954, 469, fig. 46/1-22.

<sup>66</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 159; MARINESCU-BÎLCU 1981, 70-71.

<sup>67</sup> MARINESCU-BÎLCU, BOLOMEY, 2000, 151, fig. 178/45-46; 180/4-7.

<sup>68</sup> LAZAROVICI, LAZAROVICI 2012, 337; fig. VIII.9/6; fig. VIII.65.

<sup>69</sup> BOGHIAN 2004, 159; LAZAROVICI, LAZAROVICI 2012, 337, 339; DUMITRESCU 1954, 469, 472.

<sup>70</sup> Cucuteni - Baiceni - *Dâmbul Morii* - Carnet de săpătură 3. Campania din 1977.

<sup>71</sup> LAZAROVICI, LAZAROVICI, 2012, 337.

cm. On the flat side it was brown to dark gray in color. Unfortunately, we do not know the utility of these two pieces.

### Discussion and conclusions

In archaeology, there have always been discussions about the world of miniatures and their significance. Whether it is anthropomorphic or zoomorphic statuettes, models of dwellings or their miniature models, ornaments or tools, they have always been considered elements that can be included in the interpretation of some aspects of spiritual life in prehistoric communities<sup>72</sup>.

Due to the small number of pieces and different contexts of discovery, it is difficult to make a concrete hypothesis about the utility of these artifacts. Most of the pieces, six in number, were discovered in dwelling no 5, followed by dwelling no 2 with five artifacts, three pieces in dwellings no 6 and no 11, each, and one each in dwellings no 10 and no 13. The discovery context for 4 artefacts was not specified; we only know that they were discovered during the campaigns of 1977 and 1978. For three other pieces, it is mentioned that they were discovered under the platform, unfortunately, it is not specified of which dwelling.

From the above, we conclude that at *Dambul Morii* the discovered artefacts can be classified in the category of household objects (weights, spindle-whorls, clay balls, clay tokens), as well as ornaments (beads, clay disc, amulets, etc.). Although few in number, the presence of clay weights and spindles attests to the existence of the craft of textile production and processing in the community of *Dambul Morii*.

In the same category of objects with a symbolic character are the miniature clay axe and clay disc. Interpreted mainly as amulets, in some opinions, their apotropaic function is emphasized, for protection and gender identification, boys - axes, girls - other objects<sup>73</sup>. The possibility that clay axes were considered votive pieces used in certain rituals is not excluded.

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<sup>72</sup> ENEA 2013, 94.

<sup>73</sup> ENEA 2013, 94.

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