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FAST WHEEL GRAVEL-TEMPERED COARSE WARE FOUND IN 7TH–10TH-CENTURY CEMETERIES FROM WESTERN ROMANIA

Călin Cosma[1]

Abstract: *Sometime in the 7th century, pottery made with a potter's wheel reaching a medium rotation speed appeared in the Carpathian Basin. This particular pottery, generically referred to as "Danubian-type pottery", evolved in different ways from one region to another until it was generalized in the 8th century as a specific type that characterizes large areas in central and south-eastern Europe. Owing to the technical innovations that led to the improvement of the potter's wheel, pottery also began to be produced on the fast-rotating wheel. However, 7th–10th-century fast wheel pottery from Transylvania should not be regarded as an ethnic attribute. Early Medieval wheel-thrown pottery is recorded not only in settlements but also in inhumation and bi-ritual cemeteries from Transylvania, north-western Romania and Crișana (central-western Romania), constantly appearing from the Middle Avar period (AD 650/670) until the end of the 10th century (Tab. 1–2). The list of finds thus demonstrates that all population groups archaeologically attested in Transylvania by material evidence and, especially, spiritual activities knew fast wheel pottery. These are mainly Avar and Slavic populations, represented in the group of Avar cemeteries at the Mureș river bend in central Transylvania and the Mediaș Group, which can be attributed to the Slavic and Slavo-Avar populations of the Transylvanian Plateau.*

Keywords: *Transylvania, Early Middle ages, cemeteries, potter's wheel, fast wheel pottery*

Some remarks about the study of Early Medieval pottery

When discussing the technology of production, the pottery studies focusing on the 7th–10th centuries – and not only – refer to 'pottery made with a slow wheel' or 'pottery made with a fast wheel'. I prefer to use the terms, already defined in other papers, of 'pottery made with a medium speed wheel' and 'pottery made with a fast wheel'[2]. The inner walls of the pottery made with a fast-turning wheel show horizontal ribs/grooves left by the fingers of the potter while turning the pot with the fast wheel, powered with the foot.

The potter's wheel cannot be "slow" itself. Instead, it would be more accurate to refer to its rotation speed, and thus discuss about slow-, medium- (not very fast) or fast-rotating wheels. The wheel with a medium rotation speed is activated by hand and cannot reach a constant high speed while handling the pottery recipient[3]. Several scholars mention a potter's wheel turned with the knee, which could give a faster rotation speed than the one obtained with the hand but slower than the one powered by foot[4]. For the fast-rotating wheel, the speed is given by the part

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[2] GODEA 1982, 19–42, 43–53; STANCIU/MATEI 1994, 142, n. 33a; STANCIU 2000, 127–128; CHÂTELET 2002, 27–34; ALLIOS 2004, 95–102.

[3] COMȘA 1961a, 291–297; GODEA 1982, 19–42, 43–53; CHÂTELET 2002, 27–34; ALLIOS 2004, 95–102; FUSEK 2009, 99–108.

[4] COMȘA 1961a, 292, 296; DOSTÁL 1994, 226; STANCIU 2000, 127–128; CHÂTELET 2002, 27–34; FUSEK 2009, 99–108.

activated by the foot. Using this type of wheel, the potter can obtain a gradual increase/decrease of the rotation speed and a constant turning rhythm, and, at the same time, use both hands to model the clay recipient[5].

Apart from terms such as crushed shards, fine or well-sorted sand, and mica, I have also used micro- and macro-grit to describe the composition of the clay to make the ceramic vessels. The term micro-grit refers to sand that contains grains up to 2 mm diameter, while macro-grit defines sand with grains of 2–4 mm diameter[6]. I believe these two terms are more exact for describing the clay for pottery, instead of expressions such as 'sand with small or large grains'. They provide a more accurate image of the objective characteristics of the sediment, allowing no room for suspicions about the subjectivity of each scholar who has studied pottery.

The typological classification of pottery has at its basis the form and daily use of ceramic recipients. Each pottery form is catalogued according to its height, a criterion I consider fundamental to separating pottery placed inside the grave as a funerary offering from funerary urns. Three mathematic parameters have been selected: recipients up to 10 cm high; recipients between 10 and 15 cm high; recipients taller than 16 cm. For a series of vessels, such as jars, the typological classification uses multiple geometric elements: height, rim and base diameters, shoulder and neck diameters, and the maximum diameter; as well as their interrelation on each pottery recipient. The use of mathematic proportions to determine variants within the main types has the purpose of indicating the everyday use of each recipient, hence the significance of the vessel inside the grave.

The gravel-tempered coarse ware made with the fast-rotating wheel – also categorized as "everyday pottery"[7] – found in settlements from western Romania has been the subject of several professional studies, where it has been presented as a special archaeological "phenomenon" for Early Medieval western Romania[8].

In order to have a complete picture and be able to draw conclusions about the presence of fast-rotating wheel pottery and its importance in the archaeological landscape of Early Medieval western Romania, the pottery with grooving decoration – applied on the outer walls – from the 7th–10th-century cemeteries from Transylvania and Crișana (central-western Romania) has to be included.

I have chosen this topic because Transylvanian archaeological literature on fast-rotating wheel pottery claims the absence of this ceramic type from cemeteries dated to the last four centuries of the first millennium after Christ[9]. These cemeteries date from the 7th to 10th centuries, more specifically belonging to the Avar, Slavic, Slavo-Avar, Bulgarian and Old Hungarian cultural horizons. I will not discuss the Gepid cemeteries from Transylvania. Although they also include fast-rotating wheel pottery, this is different from the gravel-tempered pottery – fired in reduction or oxidation atmosphere – found in the cemeteries belonging to the cultural groups mentioned above[10].

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[5] GODEA 1982, 19–42, 43–53; STANCIU 2000, 127–128; CHÂTELET 2002, 27–34; ALLIOS 2004, 95–102.

[6] For details about the composition of the pottery fabric see: KERAMIK 1986, 15, 35, 53; STANCIU 1998–1999, 131–132; STANCIU 2000, 127–128; CHÂTELET 2002, 27–34; ALLIOS 2004, 89–118; PARASCHIV-TALMAŢCHI 2006, 57–58.

[7] STANCIU 2000, 127–191.

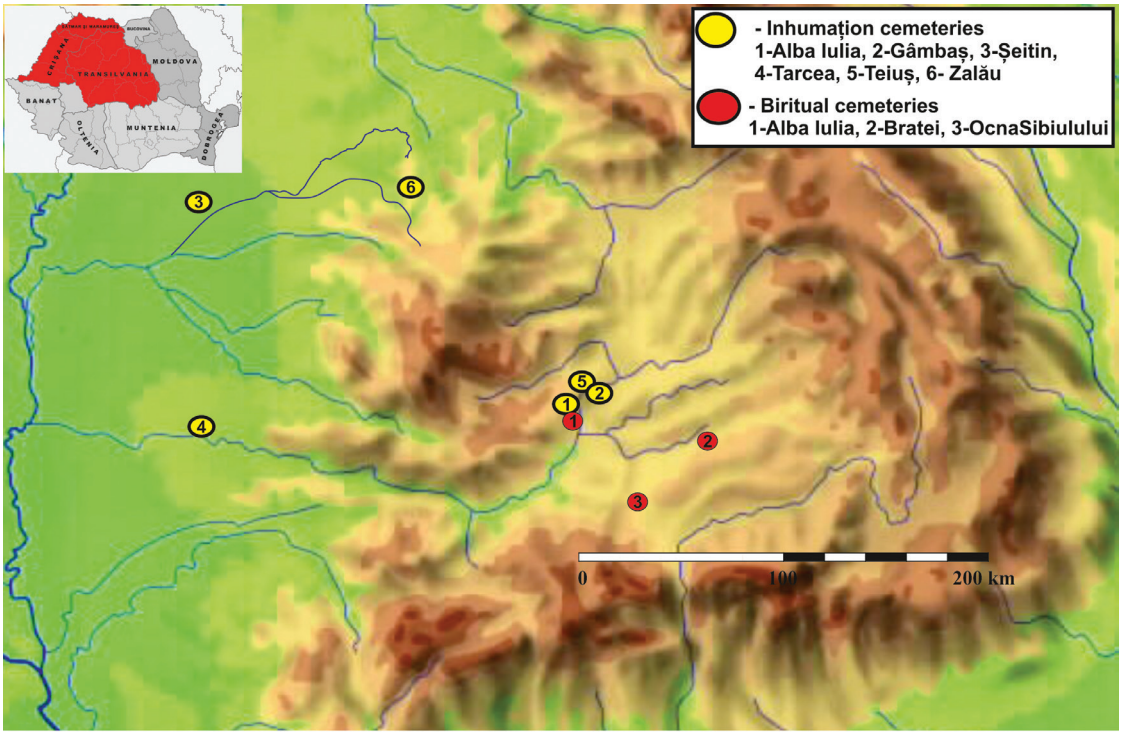
[8] STANCIU 2000, 127–191; BĂCUEȚ-CRIȘANA 2014, 111–112.

[9] STANCIU 2000, 148, 149.

[10] See M. Rusu's opinion about the ceramics from the cemeteries of the Band-Noșlac group: RUSU 1962, 286–287.

Number and geographical distribution of cemeteries with fast-rotating wheel pottery finds

The number of necropolises in western Romania where 7th–10th-century fast-rotating wheel pottery has been discovered amounts to nine. Six are flat inhumation cemeteries: Alba Iulia/Str. Brândușei (r. I.1, Pl. 1/2); Gâmbaș/Măguricea (r. I.2, Pl. 1/4); Şeitin/Alea Mureș (r. I.3, Pl. 1/3/194); Tarcea/Via lui G. Szalos (r. I.4); Teiuș/Cetățuie (r. I.5.1–2, Pl. 1/5–6); Zalău/ Palvar (r. I.6, Pl. 1/1). The other three are bi-ritual cemeteries: Alba Iulia/Staţia de Salvare (r. II.1, Pl. 2/1); Bratei/Cemetery no. 2 (r. II.2, Pl. 2/2); Ocna Sibiului/Lab (r. II.3.1–2,Pl. 2/3–4). Most of the cemeteries are located in Transylvania, except for one in north-western Romania and two in Crișana (Map No. 1).



Map 1 - Geographical distribution of cemeteries where fast-rolling wheeled pottery was discovered

In all 7th–10th-century cemeteries from western Romania, the number of burials containing fast-rotating wheel pottery is small compared to those with handmade pottery or wheel-thrown pottery made at a medium rotation speed. Fast-rotating wheel pottery was added in cremation graves of the bi-ritual cemeteries at Alba Iulia/Staţia de Salvare and Bratei/Cemetery No. 2. At Ocna Sibiului, two fast-rotating wheel vessels were discovered in inhumation graves.

Technological features

Two types of firing were observed for the fast-rotating wheel pottery from the 7th–10th-century Transylvanian cemeteries: **A** – Semi-oxidation and **B** – Oxidation firing.

A. Semi-oxidation-fired pottery.

A. 1. Fabric, technology, decoration

The semi-oxidation-fired pottery made with the fast-rotating wheel has been discovered in the necropolises at Alba Iulia/Staţia de Salvare (Pl. 2/1), Bratei/Cemetery no. 2 (Pl. 2/2),

Ocna Sibiului/Lab (Pl. 2/3–4), Şeitin/Alea Mureş (Pl. 1/3), Tarcea/Via lui G. Szalos (r. I.14), and Teiuş/Cetăţuie (Pl. l/5).

Semi-oxidation-fired pottery was obtained from a compact fabric with fine sand, micro-grit and mica. The aspect of the vessel is symmetrical. The walls are thin but can also be thicker. For most vessels, the base, flat, joins the walls at a right angle.

The firing of the pottery was good quality but still resulted in an irregular colour of the vessel walls. The main colours of the outer and inner surface are brick-brown, blackish brown, greyish orange, greyish brown.

The decoration is diverse: band of horizontal straight lines on the upper half of the vessel (Tab. 1, Pl. 1/5); narrow grooves on the neck, just below the rim (Tab. 1, Pl. 2/4), or organized in three separated bands in the upper third of the vessel (Tab. 1, Pl. 2/2); horizontal ornament combining bands of wavy lines with bands of "V" rows and bands of straight lines, organized in the upper part of the vessel (Tab. 1, pl. 2/3); horizontal ornament combining bands of wavy lines with bands of straight lines, decorating the upper third of the vessel (Tab. 1, Pl. 1/3). The fragment of a vessel from Alba Iulia/Staţia de Salvare shows two rows of small rectangular impressions running obliquely on the shoulder of the vessel and a deep horizontal incision below (Pl. 2/1).

A. 2. Typology

The types recorded for semi-oxidation-fired pottery made with the fast-rotating wheel are: **1 – Jars; 2. Vessels for serving/drinking liquids.**

1. Jar without handles, 10–14 cm high

Variants

1. Teiuş/Cetăţuie (Tab. 2, Pl. 1/5). Ovoid body with well-marked shoulders. The maximum diameter is located in the upper part and has the highest value compared with other geometric elements of the vessel. The neck is arched, and the rim is obliquely cut. The diameter of the mouth, though smaller, is close to the values of the maximum diameter and the height, as well as much larger than the diameter of the base.

2. Ocna Sibiului/Lab (Tab. 2, Pl. 2/4). Bi-conical body. The height measures more than any of the other geometric elements of the vessel. The maximum diameter is located at mid-height. Its value is close to the height but is much wider than the mouth and base. In the upper half, the walls curve strongly inwards, forming a tall, almost cylindrical neck. The mouth is much wider than the base, showing a flaring rounded rim.

3. Şeitin/Alea Mureş (Tab. 2, Pl. 2/4). Hemispherical body. The shoulder, placed in the upper part, just below the neck, is strongly convex. The maximum diameter has the highest value compared with other geometric elements of the vessel. The walls become strongly concave in the upper half, forming a short arched neck, ending in a rounded rim. The opening of the mouth is slightly wider than the diameter of the neck but much narrower than the diameter of the shoulder. The diameter of the base is much smaller than the other geometric elements of the vessel.

A. 2. Vessels for serving/drinking liquids

1. Cup, 10–15 cm high.

Variants

1. Bratei/Cemetery no. 2 (Tab. 2, Pl. 2/2). Bi-conical body. The height has the highest value compared to the other geometric elements of the vessel. The maximum diameter is located immediately above mid-height. The neck is curved, strongly arching outwards towards the rim, which is obliquely cut. The opening of the mouth is wide, slightly narrower than the maximum diameter, but much wider than the base.

2. Ocna Sibiului/Lab (Tab. 2, Pl**.** 2/3). Bi-conical body. The height measures more than any of the other geometric elements of the vessel. The maximum diameter is located at

mid-height and is close in value to the height. The neck is long and curved, arching almost obliquely outwards towards the rim, which is obliquely cut. The mouth has a large opening, not much narrower than the maximum diameter but much wider than the base. Here Tab. 2

B. Oxidation-fired pottery

B.1. Fabric, technology, decoration

Brick-red pottery made with the fast-rotating wheel has been found in the necropolises at Alba Iulia/Str. Brânduşei/Phase 1 (Pl. 1/2), Gâmbaş/Cetăţuie (Pl. 1/4), Teiuş/Cetăţuie (Pl.1/6), and Zalău/Palvar (Pl. 1/1).

The oxidation-fired pottery was produced from a compact fabric, containing fine sand, micro-grit and mica. In only one case, the potter used macro-grit as temper (Gâmbaş/Cetăţuie, Pl. 1/4). The body of the vessel is symmetrical. The walls are thin but can also be thicker. The base, flat, joins the walls at a right angle. The pottery was well-fired, resulting in a uniform colour: yellowish-orange or dark brick-red.

One of the oxidation-fired vessels is decorated with narrow horizontal grooves organized in three bands on the upper third of the vessel (Tab.1, pl. 1/4). A second vessel is decorated with loose straight horizontal lines covering the entire surface of the jar (Tab. 1, Pl. 1/2). A fragment from Zalău/Palvar shows dense straight horizontal lines. The decoration likely covered only the middle part of the vessel (Tab. 1, pl. 1/1). The fourth oxidation-fired fragment shows the lower undecorated part of a jar (Teiuş/Cetăţuie, Pl. 1/6).

B. 2. Typology

The types recorded for oxidation-fired pottery made with the fast-rotating wheel are the same as in the case of semi-oxidation firing: **1 – Jars; 2. Vessels for serving/drinking liquids.**

1.a. Jar without handles, 10–14 cm high

Variants

1 – Alba Iulia/Str. Brânduşei/Phase 1 (Tab. 2, Pl. 1/2). Globular-shaped body. The maximum diameter is located at mid-height and has the highest value compared with other geometric elements of the vessel. The height and the diameter of the mouth have similar values. Both are much larger than the diameter of the base. The neck is arched, showing a groove in the upper half. The rim is horizontally cut.

1.b. Jar without handles, probably 16–20 cm high.

Variants

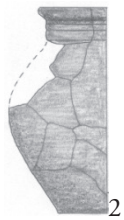
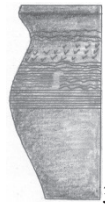
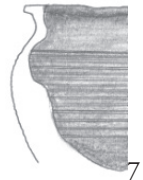
1. Teiuş/Cetăţuie (Pl. 1/6). The lower half of a jar with a very narrow bottom.

2. Zalău/Palvar (Tab. 2, Pl. 1/1). Hemispherical body. The shoulder, located in the upper part, just below the neck, is strongly convex. The walls curve strongly inwards in the upper half, forming a short arched neck. The rim is horizontally cut. The opening of the mouth is slightly wider than the diameter of the neck but much smaller than the diameter of the shoulder. The width of the shoulder is accentuated by the marked slope of the walls towards the lower part.

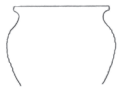
2. Vessels for serving/drinking liquids.

1. Cup. Gâmbaş/Cetăţuie' (Tab. 2, Pl. 1/4). Bi-conical body. H = 11.5 cm. The height measures more than any of the other geometric elements of the vessel. The maximum diameter is located immediately above mid-height. The neck is arched, strongly curving towards the outside, ending in a rounded rim. The opening of the mouth is wide, slightly narrower than the maximum diameter but much larger than the diameter of the bottom.

Tab. 1 – Typology of ornaments on fast-working wheeled vessels in cemeteries in western Romania from the 7-10 Centuries: 1 – Teiuș; 2 -3 – Ocna Sibiului, 4 – Bratei/cimitirul 2; 5 – Șeitin; 6 – Gâmbaș; 7- Zalău, 8 – Alba Iulia/Str. Brândușei.

Chronology		**650/670-720**	**750-850**	**901-950**	**930-960**	**960-1000**
Ornament type	**Vessel height**					
Type 1 **Semi-oxidized pottery**	10-14 cm	1	 2			
Type 2 **Semi-oxidized pottery**	10-14 cm		 3			
Type 3 **Semi-oxidized pottery**	10-14 cm		4		5	
Oxidized pottery	10-14 cm	6				
Oxidized pottery	15-20 cm			 7		
Type 4 **Oxidized pottery**	10-14 cm					8

Tab. 2 – Typology and chronology of fast-working wheeled vessels from cemeteries in western Romania from the 7th-10th: 1 – Teiuș; 2 – Ocna Sibiului, 3 – Șeitin; 4 – Alba Iulia/Str. Brândușei; 5 – Zalău; 6 – Bratei/Cimitirul 2; 7 – Ocna Sibiului, 8 – Gâmbaș

Chronology		**650/670-720**	**750-850**	**901-950**	**930-960**	**960-1000**
Jar	**Înălțime vas**					
Burning semi-oxidized	10-14 cm	1	2		**3**	
Burning oxidized	10-14 cm					4
	15-20 cm			 5		
Mug						
Burning semi-oxidized	10-14 cm		6 7			
Burning oxidized	10-14 cm	8				

Remarks about the technological characteristics and chronology of the fast-rotating wheel pottery

The number of pottery vessels made with the fast-rotating wheel, fired in a reduction or oxidation atmosphere, is very small – eight vessels that are intact or their form can be reconstructed and four fragments – compared with the pottery made at a medium rotation speed. Pottery made with the fast-rotating wheel has been recorded throughout the entire 7th–10th centuries period, but its percentage is larger in the necropolises of the Middle and Late Avar periods. The finds are missing from the three necropolises at Alba-Iulia/Staţia de Salvare/Cemetery no. 1, Blandiana/Brod and Sebeş/"downstream of the town", dated in the second half of the 9th century and the first decades of the 10th century. During the 10th century, pottery made with the fast-rotating wheel is represented by only one vessel in each of the cemeteries at Zalău/Palvar (AD 900–950), Şeitin/Alea Mureş (AD 930–960), and Alba-Iulia/Str. Brânduşei/Phase 1 (second half of the 10th century). To this last chronological segment also belongs a jar fragment from Tarcea/Via lui G. Szalos.

The fast-rotating wheel, semi-oxidation-fired pottery has been identified only in cemeteries of the Middle and Late Avar periods (AD 670–810/830/850). Brick-red or orange pottery appears in a Middle Avar period cemetery, as well as in another dating from AD 900–950, and a cemetery of the second half of the 10th century (Tab. 1–2).

The decorative models are the same on both semi-oxidation- and oxidation-fired pottery. Such is the case of two, almost identical cups, a greyish orange vessel from Bratei/Cemetery no. 2 (Tab. 1, pl. 2/7) and a brick-red cup from Gâmbaş/Cetăţuie (Tab. 1, Pl. 1/4).

During the Middle and Late Avar periods, the decoration of the pottery made at a fast and medium rotation speed appears on the upper half or upper third of the vessels (Tab. 1). The jar dating from AD 930–960, mentioned above, is also decorated on the upper third of the vessel (Tab. 1). On another jar from the second half of the 10th century, the entire body of the vessel is covered by loose straight horizontal lines (Tab. 1). The jar from the necropolis at Zalău/Palvar dating in the first half of the 10th century shows deeply incised, straight horizontal lines, which seem to decorate only the upper third of the vessel (Tab. 1). The fragment from the 8th-century necropolis at Alba Iulia/Staţia de Salvare is decorated on the shoulder with two rows of "V"-shaped impressions, incised in the form of small rectangles, to which adds beneath a deeply incised horizontal line (Pl. 1/1a).

In the last four centuries of the first millennium AD, the composition of the fabric, the decorative patterns and their display on the body of the vessels are identical on the fast-rotating wheel pottery and the pottery made at a medium rotation speed.

The fast-rotating wheel vessels placed in the graves of Transylvanian necropolises are jars without handles and cups for drinking. The firing technique has no typological relevance, both semi-oxidation and oxidation firing being recorded (Tab. 1–2).

Jars are more numerous than cups. The entirely preserved vessels have a height between 10 to 14 cm. It is highly possible that two jars, fragmentary, exceeded 16 cm. Each jar represents a variant of the main form. A jar from a cemetery of the Middle and Late Avar periods has an ovoid shape, with the maximum diameter at the shoulder, in the upper half of the vessel. The maximum diameter is larger than the height (Tab. 2). Another jar from a Late Avar cemetery has a bi-conical shape, with a height larger than the maximum diameter, located at mid-height. Due to the strong widening at the middle, the jar has a rather bellied shape, more wide than high (Tab. 2).

The two jars found in contexts dated after AD 930 have the maximum diameter larger than the height. The jar from the necropolis at Şeitin/Alea Mureş, dated between 930 and 960, has a hemispherical body with a markedly convex shoulder in the upper part. Because of the

shoulder's position just below the neck and, starting from this line, the strong narrowing of the vessel towards the bottom, the diameter of the base is very narrow compared to the opening of the mouth and the height, thus giving the jar a rather elongated shape (Tab. 2). The jar from the necropolis at Alba Iulia/Str. Brânduşei/Phase 1, dated in the second half of the 10th century, has a globular shape with the maximum diameter at mid-height (Tab. 2).

The vessels made with the fast-rotating wheel that measure over 16 cm in height are fragmentary. One preserves only the lower half of a jar with a narrow base from the Middle Avar period necropolis of Teiuş/Cetăţuie (r. Pl. 1/6). The second is the fragmentary upper part of a jar from one of the graves in the necropolis at Zalău/Palvar, dated between AD 900 and 950. The jar probably had a hemispherical body with the shoulder located in the upper part (Tab. 2).

All three cups have an elongated shape, the height measuring more than any of the other geometric elements of the vessel. The drinking cups have a bi-conical body and a relatively large mouth opening. The cup found at Gâmbaş/Măguricea dates from the Middle Avar period and those from Bratei 2 and Ocna Sibiului between AD 750–850 (Tab. 1–2).

Final considerations

The first important remark is that wheel-thrown pottery is an artefact occurring not only in Early Medieval settlements but its presence has also been recorded in inhumation and bi-ritual cemeteries from Transylvania, north-western Romania and Crişana (central-western Romania), from the Middle Avar period (AD 650/670) until the end of the 10th century (Tab. 1–2).

There are no data to certify the use of fast-rotating wheel pottery in the graves of the Avar or Slavo-Avar necropolises from western Romania[11]. To the left and right of the Lower Danube, the absence of fast-rotating wheel pottery in the 7th–8th-century cemeteries has already been discussed[12]. In this area, in the same type of archaeological sites, the use of the fast-rotating wheel has been dated since the second half of the 9th century, when the technical gear and working technique are recognized on several jars with thin walls [13]. In Slovakia[14], the Czech Republic[15] or Hungary[16], the pottery found in the 9th–11th-century necropolises has been presented as the product of wheel-throwing at a medium rotation speed.

In the settlements from Transylvania and Wallachia dated in the 8th–10th centuries, pottery made with the fast-rotating wheel is an undeniable presence[17]. Similar finds are also documented in several settlements west of the border of Romania[18].

A series of fast-rotating wheel pottery vessels from the Transylvanian necropolises of the 7th–8th centuries have analogies in the large jars (over 15 or even over 20 cm) made with the fast-rotating wheel found in settlements. Such is the case of a large jar found in House no. 2 from the settlement at Bratei, which has a similar form and identical decoration to a jar from

[11] For instance: TOČÍK 1968; KVASSAY 1984, 176–178; BÉREŠ 1985, 61–65; BUDINSKÝ-KRIČKA/ TOČÍC 1991; NEVIZÁNSKY 1991, 103–165; FIEDLER/PASSLICK/ RICHTER 1993, 243–275.

[12] FIEDLER 1992, 1, 122–124.

[13] FIEDLER 1992, 1, 124

[14] VLKOLINSKÁ 1994, 83–92; VLKOLINSKÁ 1995, 35–38; VLKOLINSKÁ 1996, 313–323; REJHOLKOVÁ 1995b, 22–24, 35–38; VLKOLINSKÁ 2007, 207–227.

[15] PROFANTOVA 2007, 191–204.

[16] TETTAAMANTI 1975, 108–109; KISS 1983; SZŐKE 1992, 139; SZŐKE 1994, 255–259; KVASSAY 1984, 173–178; RÉVÉSZ 1996, 186–187; NEPPER 2002, 1–2.

[17] COMŞA 1978, 98; ZAHARIA 1994–1995, 297–356; STANCIU 2000, 127–191; COSMA 2002a, 37–41, 109–112; COSMA 2002b, 305–308.

[18] ERDÉLYI, SZIMONOVA 1985, 385–386; BÁLINT 1991a, 41–43; VIDA 1991, 133–134; VIDA 1993, 279–280; DOSTÁL 1994, 226–227; GALUŠKA 1995, 98.

the necropolis at Teiuş/Cetăţuie' (Pl. 1/5)[19]. A second large jar from Bratei, found in House no. 7[20], can be considered the prototype for the cups made with the fast-rotating wheel from the cemeteries at Bratei /Cemetery no. 2 and Gâmbaş/Cetățuie (Tab. 2, Pl. 1/4).

The shape of the 10th-century fast-rotating wheel pottery found in the Transylvanian cemeteries is very similar to many wheel-thrown jars made at a medium rotation speed, also discovered in the Transylvanian cemeteries. The potter likely shaped fast-rotating wheel jars after the types already in use in the 10th century. The multitude of jar types made with the fast-rotating wheel in the 8th–10th-century settlements suggests that this process occurred before the 10th century.[21]

The gravel-tempered fast wheel pottery appeared in the settlements of western Romania at the end of the 7th century and especially at the beginning of the 8th century, its presence at archaeological sites continuing until the end of the 9th century[22]. It should also be noted that the fast wheel pottery of the type mentioned above appears only in the Transylvanian Basin and the north-western part of Romania[23], and it was ethnically attributed to a Romanian[24] or a Romanic population[25], which is an extremely interesting, courageous and very frank point of view.

If we were to agree with the above, this would mean that the Romanians may have appeared suddenly in late 7th-century Transylvania, identifying themselves among the other populations of the Transylvanian Plateau or north-western Romania through this gravel-tempered fast wheel pottery. They continued to use it until the end of the 9th century, or even into the 10th century, after which they disappeared together with this type of pottery, only to reappear at the end of the 13th century, when wheel-thrown pottery once again entered the everyday use in Transylvania and became widespread during the 14th century[26].

It is, however, difficult to believe that this Romanian or Romanic population from Transylvania, or northwest Romania, reinvented the fast potter's wheel at the beginning of the 8th century, a gear already known since Antiquity, and created those pots that are distinguished by ribs/grooves on their inner walls. The reemergence of gravel-tempered fast wheel pottery should be seen as a natural evolution of pottery-making techniques of the Early Middle Ages. Sometime in the 7th century, gravel-tempered wheel-thrown pottery made at a medium rotation speed, being referred to as "Danubian-type pottery", appeared in the Carpathian Basin[27]. This pottery evolved in different ways from one region to another, until it stabilized as a type of pottery vessel in the 8th century, covering large areas of central and south-eastern Europe. Technical innovations in perfecting the potter's wheel led in time to pottery being produced on the fast-rotating wheel. The process did not occur identically in terms of production technique (fabric, firing) or intensity in all areas of the 7th–9th-century Carpathian Basin. For the introduction of fast wheel pottery in western Transylvania at the beginning of the 8th century, the existence of itinerant potters from the Byzantine Empire, who knew the technique of wheel-throwing, should also be considered. An example is the almost identical shape and decoration of two cups found one in the Gâmbaș/Măguricea cemetery (Pl. 1/4) and the other in the Slav-Avar cemetery

[19] ZAHARIA 1994–1995, 302, fig. 10/14.

[20] ZAHARIA 1994–1995, 305–306, fig. 18/3.

[21] COMŞA 1978, 98; STANCIU 2000, 127–191; COSMA 2002a, 37–41, 109–112; COSMA 2002a, 305–308.

[22] STANCIU 2000, 13O–141; BĂCUEȚ-CRIȘAN 2017, 112.

[23] STANCIU 2000, 141–145, 146–150.

[24] STANCIU 2000, 150.

[25] BĂCUEȚ-CRIȘAN 2017, 112.

[26] On the evolution of medium- and fast-rotating wheel pottery at the end of the Early Middle Ages in Crișana and Transylvania see: POPA/CĂPĂȚÂNĂ/LUKÁCS 1987, 91, 97, 98

[27] STAŇA 1995, 85–95.

at Bratei/Cemetery No. 2 (Pl. 2/2), and which are possibly the product of the same potter, who visited both the Avar community at Gâmbaș/Măguricea and the Slavic community at Bratei. Some vessel types could be imports, such as amphorae, which transported during the 7th–8th centuries wine from Byzantium to the Avar Khaganate in Pannonia[28]. Moreover, I wonder if and how important were the grooves of the inner vessel walls, and thus not visible on the outside, for the people of the 7th–10th-century western Romania. The shape and usefulness of the vessels were certainly more important when procuring pottery.

At the beginning of this sub-chapter, I mentioned that fast-rotating wheel pottery has been found not only in settlements but also in the Avar and Slavic or Slavo-Avar cemeteries in Transylvania. This archaeological situation indicates that all groups of populations archaeologically attested in Transylvania by material evidence, and especially spiritual activities, knew fast wheel pottery. These are mainly the Avar and Slavic populations, identified in the group of Avar cemeteries at the Mureș river bend in central Transylvania, as well as in the Mediaș Group, belonging to the Slavic and Slavo-Avar populations of the Transylvanian Plateau.

Catalogue of finds

I. Inhumation cemeteries

1. Alba-Iulia/Str. Brânduşei/Phase 1 (Alba County)

Jar (Pl. 1/2); grave M. 107/2005; in a woman's burial; found near the right calf; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with pebbles; yellowish-orange colour, with traces of secondary burning; the entire vessel is decorated with straight horizontal lines; H = 11 cm, D_g = 10.3 cm, D_f = 6.3 cm, D_m = 12.2 cm. DRAGOTĂ/RUSTOIU 2007, 236, Fig. 10–10a; DRAGOTĂ et alii 2009, 51, Pl. 45/M. 107/1, 108–112. MNUAI, inv. no. F. 9375.

2. Gâmbaş/Măguricea (Alba County)

Cup (Pl. 1/4); grave M. 14; in a warrior burial; found near the right shoulder; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with macro-grit; yellowish-orange colour, with brown spots; shows traces of a secondary burning; decorated on the neck with a horizontal rib; additional broad grooves appear on the body, traces left by the potters' fingers during the fast wheel-throwing; H = 11.5 cm, D_g = 9 cm, D_f = 6 cm, D_m = 9.5 cm. HOREDT 1951, 198, nr. 21, Pl. VII/10; HOREDT 1958, 100, M.XVII/1, Fig. 14/5. MNITCN, inv. no. III. 8856/V.1490. Cosma 2017, 60–61, Pl. 20/M.14/5.

3. Şeitin/Aleea Mureş (Arad County)

Jar (Pl. 1/3); grave M. 4/1965; with an adult deceased; found at the end of the feet; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with fine sand; greyish brown colour, with traces of a secondary burning; decorated on the upper third with two bands of horizontal wavy lines intersecting with two bands of horizontal straight lines; H = 13 cm, D_g = 12 cm, D_f = 8 cm, D_m = 15 cm. MĂRGHITAN 1965, 583, Fig. 3; COSMA 2002, 228, nr. 192, M. 4, Pl. 237/11. MJA, inv. no. 14315.

4. Tarcea/Via lui G. Szalos (Bihor County)

Jar, fragmentary; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with sand; greyish brown colour; decorated with a band of thin horizontal ribs and a band of wavy lines. 10th century. COSMA 2002, 233, nr. 201, Pl. 235/2. MȚCO, inv. no. 11765.

5. Teiuş/Cetățuie (Alba County)

1. Jar, a fragment from the lower part (Pl. 1/6); grave M. 13; in a woman's burial; found at the end of the feet, on the right side; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with micro-grit; dark brick-red colour; shows no traces of secondary burning; the preserved part is

[28] CSIKI/MAGYAR-HÁRSHEGYI 2015, 175–182.

undecorated; $H_{preserved}$ = 9 cm, D_g =? cm, D_f = 7.6 cm, D_m =? cm. COSMA 2017, 81, Pl. 47/M. 13/1. MNITCN, without inv. no.

2. Jar (Pl. 1/5); grave M. 21; in a woman's burial; found at the end of the feet, on the right side; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with micro-grit; blackish brown colour with reddish spots; shows traces of secondary burning; decorated on the shoulder with a register of four deeply incised, horizontal lines; H = 11.5 cm, D_g = 10.1 cm, D_f = 6 cm, D_m = 12.5 cm. HOREDT 1958, 105, Fig. 17/11; COSMA 2017, 83, Pl. 48/M. 21/6**.** MNITCN, inv. no. V. 34458.

6. Zalău/Palvar (Sălaj County)

Jar (Pl. 39/168); grave M. 9; with an adult deceased; found on the right side of the skull; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with fine sand and mica tinsels; brick-red colour with yellowish spots; decorated at the middle with straight horizontal lines; $H_{preserved}$ = 12 cm, D_g = 14.9 cm, D_f =? cm; D_m = 16.7 cm. COSMA 2006–2007, 243, Pl. 5/10. MIAZ, inv. no. 66/2002.

II. Cremation cemeteries

1. Alba Iulia/Staţia de salvare (Alba County)

Jar, fragmentary (Pl. 2/1); grave M. 522; cremation of a juvenile, male gender; found near the pile of cremated remains; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with micro-grit; reddish-brown colour, with traces of secondary burning; decorated on the shoulder with two rows of oblique impressions, beneath them a deeply incised line; $H_{preserved}$= 5 cm; D_g = 11 cm. BLĂJAN/BOTEZATU 2000, 461–464, Fig. 6b. MNUAI.

2. Bratei/Cemetery no. 2 (Sibiu County)

Cup, the form can be reconstructed (Pl. 2/7); grave M. 38; cremation; vessel already broken at the time of burial; found in the upper part of the pit filling; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with micro-grit; greyish orange colour, with traces of secondary burning; the walls are decorated with loose grooves; H = 13.5 cm, D_g = 10.2 cm, D_f = 7.5 cm, D_m = 11.5 cm. ZAHARIA 1977, 51/M. 38, Fig. 20/9, 28/6. IAB.

3. Ocna Sibiului/Lab (Sibiu County)

1. Cup (Pl. 2/3); grave M. 22; inhumation of a child; found at the end of the feet, on the right side; disturbed position, with the mouth facing NW; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with micro-grit and mica; reddish-brown colour; shows no traces of secondary burning; decorated just below the rim and on the shoulder with horizontal wavy lines and thin horizontal ribs at mid-height; H = 10.7 cm, D_g = 9.2 cm, D_f = 6 cm, D_m = 10 cm. PROTASE 2004, 15/M. 22, Pl. XIII, XIV, XXIV. IAIACN.

2. Jar (Pl. 2/4); grave M. 116; inhumation of a child; found at the end of the feet; fast-rotating wheel; compact fabric tempered with micro-grit and mica; reddish-brown colour; shows no traces of secondary burning; decorated right below the neck with a horizontal groove; H = 13.4 cm, D_g = 9.1 cm, D_f = 6 cm, D_m = 12.9 cm. PROTASE 2004, 35/M. 116, Pl. XXVI; IAIACN.

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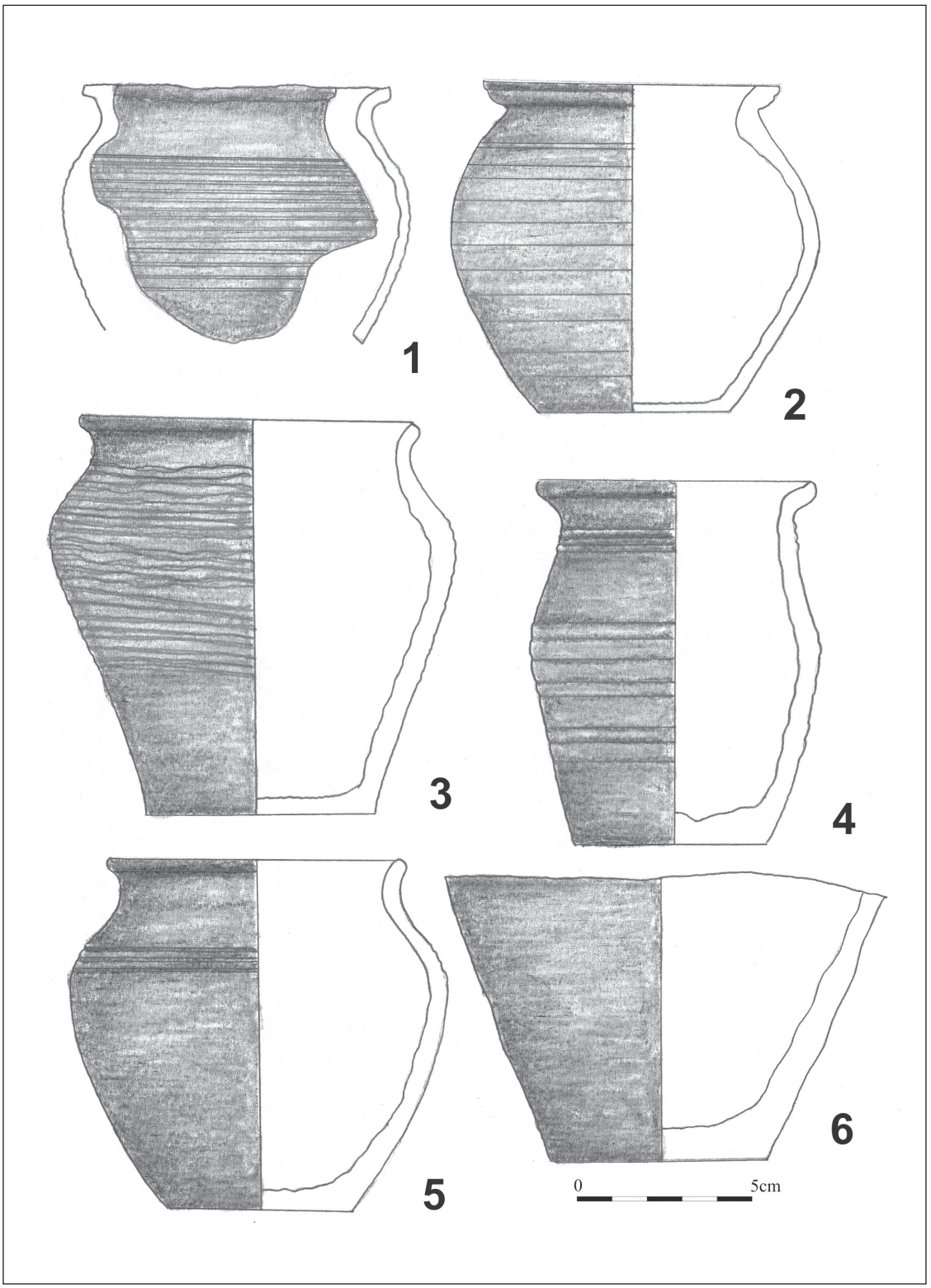
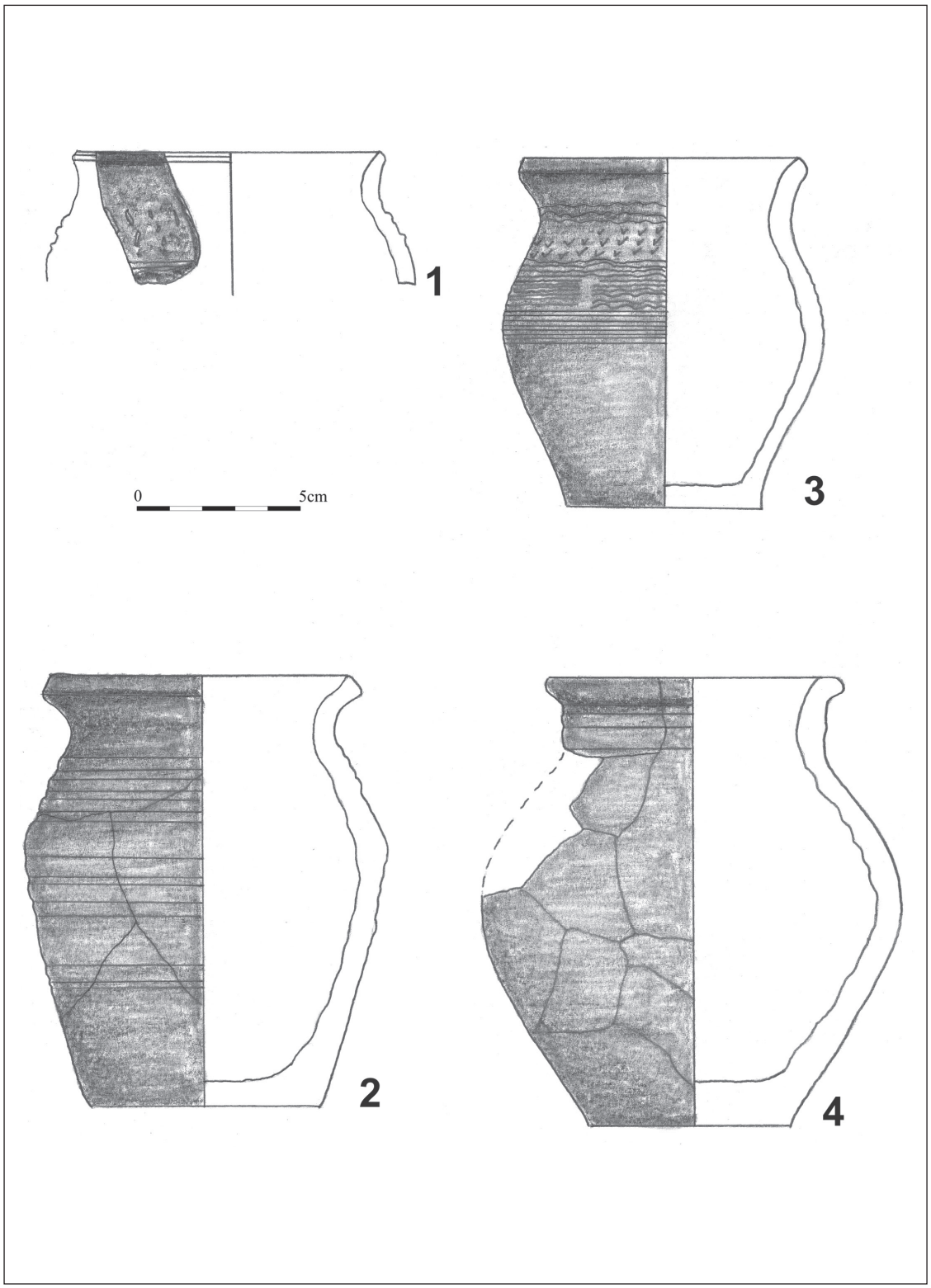


Pl. 1 – Ceramics worked on the wheel with fast speed from inhumation cemeteries: 1 – Zalău; 2. – Alba Iulia/ Str. Brândușei; 3 – Șeitin; 4 – Gâmbaș; 5-6 – Teiuș



Pl. 2 – Ceramics worked on the wheel with fast speed from biritual cemeteries: Cremation graves: 1 – Alba – Iulia; 2 – Bratei/cimitirul nr. 2; Inhumation graves: 3-4 – Ocna Sibiului.

ABBREVIATIONS THAT CAN NOT BE FOUND IN BERICHT DER RÖMISCH-GERMANISCHE KOMMISSION

Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin	= AKAWB
Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debrecensis, Debrecen	= ACD
Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapesta)	= Acta Ethnogr Acad Scien Hungaricae
Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile secţiunii istorice	= An. Acad. Române. Mem. Sec. Istor.
Analele Banatului (Timişoara)	= An. Banatului
Analele Dobrogei (Constanţa)	= An. Dobrogei
Muzeului Judeţean Vaslui (Vaslui)	= Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis
Muzeul "Vasile Pârvan" (Bârlad)	= Acta Musei Tutovensis
Analele Universităţii Bucureşti	= An. Univ. Bucureşti
Analele Universităţii Iaşi	= An. Univ. Iaşi
Analele Universităţii „Dimitrie Cantemir" (Constanţa)	= An. Univ. Constanţa
Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations (Paris)	= Ann. Écon. Soc. Civil.
Arheologia Moldovei, Institutul de Arheologie (Iaşi)	= ArhMold
Arkheologiya, Natsional'na akademiya nauk Ukraini. Institut Arkheologii (Kyiv)	= Arkheologiya
Annales Universitatis Apulensis (Alba Iulia)	= AUA
Annali di scienze religiose, Milano	= Annali di scienze religiose
Anuarul Institutului pentru Studii Politice, de Apărare şi Istorie Militară	= Anu. Instit. Stud. Pol. Apăr. şi Istor. Milit.
Archaeologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich (-Ungarn), Wien	= AEM
Archiv des Vereines für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde, Hermannstadt – Kronstadt (Sibiu – Braşov)	= AVSL
Archaeologia Baltica Polonia = Peregrinatio Gotica (Łódz)	= Arh Baltica
Arheologia Medievală (Iaşi)	= Arh. Medievală
Antigüedad, religiones y sociedades, Huelva	= ARYS
Az alsófehérmegyei történelmi régészeti és természettudomány évkönyve (Alba Iulia)	= AlsóTermÉvkönyve
Balcanica Posnanensia. Acta et Studia. Czasopismo wydawane przez UAM w Poznaniu	= Balcanica Posnaniensia
Buletinul cercurilor ştiinţifice studenţeşti (Alba Iulia)	= BCŞS Alba Iulia
Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice (Bucureşti)	= BMI
Instrumentum Bulletin du Groupe de travail européen	= Bull Instrumentum

sur l´artisanat et les productions manufacturées dans l´Antiquité (Montagnac)	
Bulletin antieke beschaving Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology	= BABesch
Bulletin de l´Institut historique belge de Rome (Rome)	= BullInst Hist Belge (Rome)
Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz, Sorbonne (Paris)	= Cahiers Centre Gustave Glotz
Complexul Muzeal „Iulian Antonescu" (Bacău)	= Carpica
Cercetări arheologice, Muzeul Naţional de Istorie a României (Bucureşti)	= Cercetări Arheologice
Muzeul Municipiului Bucureşti (Bucureşti)	= Cercetări arheologice în Bucureşti
Classical Philology (Chicago)	= Class. Philol.
Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România (Bucureşti)	= CCA
Cronica Numismatică şi Arheologică (Bucureşti)	= Cron. Numis. Arh.
Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en	= Dacia
Roumanie, Bucureşti, I-XII (1924–1928); Nouvelle Série: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne (Bucureşti)	
Muzeului de Istorie Galati	= Danubius
Dialogues d´Histoire Ancienne, París-Besançon	= DHA
Dicţionarul limbii romîne moderne (Bucureşti 1958)	= DRLM
Documenta Romaniae Historica (Bucureşti)	= DRH
Les Dossiers d'archeologie, París	= DossPar
Ethnic and Racial Studies (London)	= Ethnic and Racial Studies
Ephemeris Napocensis, Institutul de Arheologie şi Istoria Artei, Cluj-Napoca	= EphemNap
File de Istorie = Revista Bistriţei (Bistriţa)	= FI (Rev. Bistriţei)
Muzeul judeţean Ilfov (Bucureşti)	= File de Istorie
Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford 1966)	= Greek-English 1966
Harvard Studies in Classical Philology	= Harvard Stud. Class. Studia Philol.
A Herman Ottó Muzeum Évkönyve (Miskolc)	= HOMÉ
Hrvatski arheološki godišnjak (Zagreb)	= Hrv. Arh. God.
Historica. Historia Antigua (Salamanca)	= Stud. Hist. Hist. Antigua
Il Mar Nero Annali di archeologia e storia (Roma)	= Il Mar Nero
Izvestija Russkogo Arheologičeskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole	= Izv. Ross. Arch. Inst. Konstantinopole
Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien	= ÖJh
Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology and History of Art Cluj-Napoca	= JAHA
Jósa András Múzeum Évkönyve (Nyíregyháza)	= JAMÉ
Journal of Indo-European Studies (Washington DC)	= JIES
Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatists	= Journal Soc. Ancient Numism.
Könyv és könyvtár, Budapest	= Könyv és könyvtár
Labeo Rassegna di Diritto Romano (Napoli)	= Labeo
Lateinisch-Deutsch Schulwörterbuch (Leipzig 1891)	= Lateinisch-Deutsch 1891
Lateinisch-Deutsch Handwörterbuch (Hannover-Leipzig 1918)	= Lateinisch-Deutsch 1918

Litua. Studii şi comunicări. Muzeul Judeţean Gorj, Târgu Jiu	= Litua
M. M. Roxan, P. Holder, Roman Military Diplomas, London	= RMD
Materialy po arkheologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii. Krymskoe otdelenie Instituta vostokovedeniya NAN Ukrainy (Simferopol')	= MAIET
Muzeul Municipiului Bucureşti	= Materiale de Istorie şi Muzeografie
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Norba Revista de arte, geografía e historia (Cáceres)	= Norba
Numismatische Zeitschrift	= NZ
O Arqueólogo Portugués, Lisboa	= Arque. Portugués
Opţiuni istoriografice, Iaşi	= Opţiuni istoriografice
Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica, Lovaina (Leuven)	= OLP
Ostraka Rivista di antichità (Napoli)	= Ostraka
Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Prague)	= Památky Archeologické
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Rossijskaya Arkheologiya. Institut arkheologii Rossijskoj akademii nauk (Moskva).	= RA
Rad Muzeja Vojvodine (Novi Sad)	= Rad Muz. Voj.
RepArAb Repertoriul arheologic al judeţului Alba, Alba Iulia, 1995 [= Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis, II]	= RepArAb
Res Antiquae (Bruxelles)	= Res Antiquae
Revista de etnografie şi folclor (Bucureşti)	= Rev Etnogr şi Folclor
Revista Bistriţei	= Rev. Bistriţei
Muzeul Municipiului Bucureşti	= Revista de Cercetări Arheologice şi Numismatice
Muzeul Naţional de Etnografie şi Istorie Naturală a Moldovei (Chişinău)	= Revistă de Etnografie, Ştiinţele Naturii şi Muzeologie
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Studii şi Cercetări de Istorie veche şi Arheologie, Institutul de Arheologie "Vasile Pârvan" (Bucureşti)	= SCIV(A)
Slovenská Archeologia. Archeologický ústav SAV (Nitra)	= SlovArch
Stratum plus, Vysshaya Antropologicheskaya Shkola (Chişinău)	= Stratum plus
Studia Universitatis „Babeş-Bolyai", seria Historia, Cluj-Napoca	= Stud. Historia UBB
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