



**ROMANIAN ACADEMY  
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ACADEMY  
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**ABSTRACT OF PHD THESIS**

***THE NEO-ENEOLITHIC OF DOBRUDJA***

**PhD supervisor:**

**CȘ II. DR. HABIL. ADINA ELENA BORONEANȚ**

**PhD candidate:**

**DRAGOȘ NICOLAE NEAGU**

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## THE NEO-ENEOLITHIC OF DOBRUDJA

**Keywords:** *Dobrudja Neo-Eneolithic, paleoclimate and paleoenvironment of the 7th - 4th millennia B.C., Hamangia culture, Boian culture, Gumelnița - Karanovo VI - Kodjadermen cultural complex, Cernavoda I culture.*

The last work covering the Neo-Eneolithic in Dobrudja was the synthesis elaborated by Puiu Hașotti in 1997, which brought together a series of general aspects of the Hamangia, Boian, Gumelnița and Cernavoda I cultures. Subsequently, Cristian Micu rediscussed some of the issues in his doctoral dissertation on the Boian cultural manifestations in northern Dobrudja, published in 2006.

Since then, new archaeological research has been carried out in some of the already well-known sites in the area of interest (*Hârșova-tell, Cernavodă-Columbia D, Luncavița-Ceățuia, Carcaliu, Trestenic, Mangalia-Dobrogea I and II, Cheia-Vatra Satului* and the caves in the Cheia area, *Durankulak-Golemija Ostrov, Provadia-Solnitsata*, the necropolis of Varna and Durankulak, etc. ) and in a series of others, more recently identified (*Maliuc-Taraschina, Maliuc-Dâmbul lui Haralambie, Techirgiol-Paloda, Palazu Mare-Malul Alb*), which have opened new perspectives and directions of analysis complementary to those already known.

A series of geomorphological, geo-ecological and geoclimatic investigations have also been carried out in the Danube Delta, the Black Sea shelf in the area of Romania and Bulgaria and lakes Oltina, Durankulak, Shabla-Ezeret and Varna-Beloslav, which provides a complementary and necessary direction of study regarding the evolution of the Dobrudja during the Neo-Eneolithic and the Hamangia, Boian, Gumelnița - Karanovo VI - Kodjadermen and Cernavoda I elements in the context of climatic and environmental changes and sea level disturbances between the 7th and 4th millennia B.C., which is analyzed more zonally.

Considerations of this type have been too little treated in the broad sense of the region and historical period, their integration into a plurivalent outline associated with the specific archaeological circumstances of the whole Dobrudja not having been realized up to now.

Thus, this doctoral thesis approaches the study of the Neo-Neolithic dwellings of North and South Dobrudja using new multidisciplinary results (archaeological, geomorphological, geocological, etc.) and the older, traditional ones, in an attempt to construct a symbiotic presentation of all the known and studied coordinates that have influenced and shaped the cultural exponents of the Neo-Eneolithic in Dobrudja.

## **I. NEO-ENEOLITHIC DOBRUDJA IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The political-state course of the region, which was part of the Ottoman Empire until 1878, obviously influenced the evolution of archaeological research in this area.

The period of the Ottoman occupation proved not to be conducive to systematic interventions, as the ultra-religious principles of the empire were at odds with the critical and rational spirit of science. The consequences of such a vision turned out to be negative with major implications for cultural<sup>1</sup> and scientific heritage. The situation changed with the accession of Dobrudja to Romania, the context becoming favourable for archaeological interventions, Romanian researchers showing a clear interest in the history of the territory between the Danube and the sea.

In the last decade of the 19th century, the need to inventory heritage assets became more and more evident, with Dobrudja representing a challenge for researchers due to the partial exploration of the region.

The interest for Dobrudja, a general one, stimulated by the unification of November 14, 1878, made the historical region to be in the center of public opinion, the political, scientific and cultural elites not only wishing for territorial integration but also for its historical and cultural annexation, and also wishing to base the political realities on the historical ones.

The fulfilment of this wish could be realized only through a deep knowledge of all the historical and cultural veins existing here.

The post-unionist frenzy proved favorable for archaeological research. During this period, important financial resources were allocated to support the investigations that had to fill in a short time the information gaps that had accumulated over time.

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<sup>1</sup> Tangible and intangible.

The concerns of Romanian archaeologists were in line with the current of classical, universal archaeology specific to the 19th century, aiming to study ancient societies known from Latin and Greek texts. In line with the Western trend, they were primarily concerned with the research of the Greco-Roman remains existing in Dobrudja (Vulpe, 1938, p. 36-37), The National Museum of Antiquities, through its director at that time Grigore Tocilescu, entrusted the topographer and archaeologist Pamfil Polonic with the detailed research of the Dobrudja space.

The investigations began in 1895 and continued until the end of the century. The initial research focused on the Black Sea coastline between Mangalia and Sinoe, progressively reaching Babadag and as far as the vicinity of Lake Razelm and the Sfântu Gheorghe inlet, and the researcher's foray ended in Constanța County, beyond the town of Ostrov.

His report contains a number of mentions of the archaeological complexes discovered, including some prehistoric ones. With the passage of time, a large number of these were found to belong to the neo-eneolithic cultures of Hamangia, Boian, Gumelnița and Cernavoda I (Comșa, 1987, p. 10).

The annexation of Cadrilater<sup>2</sup> to Dobrudja allowed the expansion of archaeological research in the annexed area for a period of almost three decades until the fall of 1940 when, due to the international political context, South Dobrudja returns to Bulgaria. The effects of the two world wars were also felt and had a less positive influence on the archaeology of the Dobrudja area. However, cultural institutions in Bulgaria and Romania, through their representatives, have shown commitment and determination, and investigations in the region have followed a progressive trend despite the unfavorable circumstances.

### ***1.1. HAMANGIA CULTURE***

The year 1952 is defining in the historiography of the Hamangia culture, representing the boundary between two periods. The first, when archaeologists lacking information inaccurately attributed the Hamangia cultural material to other periods and cultures, and the second, synonymous with the declaration of the oldest Neolithic culture in Dobrudja.

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<sup>2</sup> 1913.

Following the context of the period Vasile Pârvan mentioned the discovery of some ceramic fragments in the locality of Baia (formerly Hamangia), considered as belonging to the Bronze Age (Pârvan, 1925, p. 422 - 429).

The archaeologist's opinion generated at that time some opposition. The most vehement one belonged to Ioan Andrieşescu, who correctly recognized the much deeper age of the recovered pottery (Andrieşescu, 1928, p. 7 - 9). Finally, after three decades ceramic material discovered in the past by V. Pârvan has been attributed to the Hamangia culture, following its definition by Dumitru Berciu (Berciu, Morintz, 1953, p. 123 - 129).

For specialized historiography, V. Pârvan study was the first one to submit the archaeological particularities found in Dobrudja to the discussion of the specialists of the time.

## ***1.2. BOIAN CULTURE***

As far as the Boian finds in Dobrudja are concerned, they have a lower share compared to those belonging to the Hamangia and Gumelnița cultures, most of which are spread along the right bank of the Danube (*Cernavodă-Columbia A*, *Cernavodă-Columbia C*, *Cernavodă-Dealul Sofia*, *Cernavodă-Hinog*, *Capidava*, *Hârşova-tell*, *Ghindăreşti*, *Sarichioi-La Bursuci*, *Isaccea-Suhat*), and others in the center (*Gura Dobrogei*, *Tariverde*) and south of the region (*Sokol-Atmageaua Tătărască*, *Durankulak*). For the most part, they were discovered as part of complex archaeological contexts associated with other Neolithic cultures in the region.

Excavations in the *Columbia A* and *Columbia C* archaeological sites led to the discovery of fragments of Boian-Giuleşti pottery in the Hamangia cultural levels (Morintz et alii, 1955, p. 152 - 154).

In addition, we mention the older ceramic materials from the Boian-Vidra phase, recovered from the archaeological sites of *Dealul Sofia* (Berciu, Morintz, 1957, p. 83-89), *Hinog* (Christescu, 1925, p. 250) and *Capidava* (Comşa, 1974a, p. 232).

Similar cultural elements were also reported in southern Dobrudja. The fragmentary pieces from the *Atmageaua Tătărască* settlement bear the features of the final phase of the Boian culture (Haşotti, 1997, p. 66).

The situation is similar with regard to the *Durankulak* necropolis, which is distinguished by the considerable quantity of Boian pottery discovered, with Boian-



Spanțov type vessels frequently found in the tombs<sup>3</sup> from the Hamangia IV phase (Todorova *et alii*, 2002).

### ***1.3. GUMELNIȚA - KARANOVO VI - KODJADERMEN CULTURAL COMPLEX***

Pamfil Polonic made a substantial contribution to the research of the Dobrudja area, his journey along the Black Sea coast as far as the Sfântu Gheorghe Arm and along the Danube from Tulcea to the vicinity of Ostrov (Constanța County), resulting in the identification of a number of archaeological sites, some of them prehistoric.

At the same time, the researcher is the first to mention the Eneolithic settlement of Luncavița-Cetățuia located "on the left bank of the Luncavița stream at the confluence with the Hidden Valley, under the foothills, 4 km south of the village of Luncavița", highlighting the similarities between the archaeological materials identified here and those recovered over time from the "prehistoric fortresses of Romania" already known (Comșa, 1952, p. 413 - 416). He also mentions the existence of a "large earthen fortress" near Ghindărești (Constanța county), categorizing the finds here as prehistoric (Comșa, 1987, p. 10 - 11).

In his survey along the Danube, once he arrived in Cernavodă on the occasion of the archaeological prospections carried out at Axiopolis (1898 - 1899) P. Polonic recovered a prehistoric idol (Vulpe, 1928, p. 127) considered by him as an element of Neolithic plastic art, in the absence of a well-defined archaeological context, it was not possible to establish a categorical cultural classification for it (Hașotti, 1997, p. 71).

A period without important discoveries followed, archaeological activity in Dobrudja being limited to the interventions of amateur archaeologists and the recovery of some objects considered to be prehistoric in Luncavița, Garvăn and Niculițel (Comșa, 1987, p. 11).

### ***1.4. CERNAVODA I CULTURE***

A relatively recent addition to the suite of Eneolithic cultures in Dobrudja, the discovery of the Cernavoda I culture is attributed to the renowned archaeologist and historian I. Nestor. The conclusions of the investigations carried out by him in the autumn

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<sup>3</sup> Male tombs **M461** (tabl. 75/10), **M512** (tabl. 82/3), female tomb **M545** (tabl.89 /13) and cenotaph **M253** (tabl. 24/16) (Todorova *et alii*, 2002).

of 1936 point to the existence of a "special aspect of the Gumelnița-type civilization" at Cernavoda, unknown to the academic sphere until then (Nestor, 1937).

The cultural association is not exactly appropriate, but his claims are the first of their kind to promote the cultural differences discovered, separating them from those of the cultures present at Cernavodă.

This was followed by a period in which Romanian archaeologists in search of answers proposed a series of cultural-phaseological hypotheses.

## **II. THE MESOLITHIC BACKGROUND AND NEOLITIZATION OF DOBRUDJA**

Seen from a multidisciplinary point of view, the Mesolithic period stands out as a crucible of geomorphological, climatic, bioecological, cultural, etc. changes during which natural phenomena succeeded one another at a relatively rapid pace, conditioning the reaction of human communities specific to the period, forced to adapt to new circumstances. It is a stage of transition, of the gradual assumption of neolithic values born within the mesolithic groups or coming from outside them in various ways.

In most parts of the world, the transition to the Neolithic was a smooth one without cultural interstices. As far as Dobrudja is concerned the situation is a particular one, the late Neolithization of the region, which occurred only in the Middle Neolithic and the cultural hiatus existing at the Early Neolithic level, have left room for a number of interpretations and hypotheses. The dissonant character encountered here represents an exception to the general prehistoric context of the Balkans and southeastern Europe where the transition occurred relatively naturally.

This is why our analysis of the Neolithic in the Dobrudja area begins with a brief review of the peculiarities of the Mesolithic background in Dobrudja. Our approach traces the natural (geological, climatic, ecological) and human manifestations that took place at the end of the Pleistocene and in the first half of the Holocene and their implications for the entire region. In doing so, we have taken into account research and studies from the last century, as well as recent ones from the 21st century.

### **III. DOBRUDJA - PALEOCLIMATE AND PALEOENVIRONMENT OF THE VII - IV MILLENNIA B.C.**

The present relief of Dobrudja is the result of multiple geomorphologic processes, started in the Precambrian, continued during the Paleozoic and Mesozoic, and concluded at the end of the Cretaceous.

Of Dobrudja's<sup>4</sup> 23,400 km<sup>2</sup>, 338 km<sup>2</sup> belong to Ukraine (Heller, Sallanz, 2009), 15,570 km<sup>2</sup> to Romania and 7,412 km<sup>2</sup> to Bulgaria. The relief unit is bounded to the north and west by the Danube River, to the east by the Black Sea, and to the south by a part of northeastern Bulgaria (Dobrici and Silistra regions), extending beyond the current political border of Romania.

Dobrudja is a complex land that brings together lake, marsh, delta and lowland areas, as well as high plains, hills, plateaus, plateaus and hercynian mountains.

Structurally, the region is divided into three major relief sub-units: the Danube Delta, the Măcin Mountains and the Moesic Plateau. The Danube Delta is a relatively young relief sub-unit, formed by alluvium brought by river and marine currents, which were deposited in the deltaic area throughout the Holocene. The Hercynian massif, known as the Macin Mountains, is the oldest relief unit in the region (Cociu, 1993, p. 11).

Dobrudja's geomorphologic composition includes low massifs and ridges (with maximum heights of 467 m), inland plateaus (altitudes between 100 and 300 m), lake and river terraces (between 15 and 100 m), the sea coast, the marine, overwater and underwater terraces, alluvial and deltaic plains, and lake and marshland areas.

The relief units are based on compact structures, formed of hard rocks such as granites, diabase, limestones, crystalline schists, green schists, marls, sandstones, etc., covered mostly by loess, over unconsolidated sedimentary rock of aeolian origin, deposited over time, fertile soils (Coteț, Popovici, 1972, p. 10 - 12).

Throughout the Holocene, the human individual becomes more and more linked to the natural environment as he interacts with it more and more systematically, the coordinates of the relationship gradually going beyond the connotations of the hunter-gatherer-fisherman status of the Mesolithic, by assuming Neolithic values. The sedentary way of life, the association of the individual with a social group defined by complex values that preserve only some of the classical attributes specific to Mesolithic groups, the access

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<sup>4</sup> The areas were established by the Treaties of Paris 1856, Berlin 1878 and Paris 1947.

to new family and social roles and the expansion of the occupational palette give the individual an apparent independence in relation to the environment. The technological, cultural, social and occupational leap gives it a more stable existence with predictable, repetitive activities, but the dependence on the natural environment remains, the so-called autonomy still being conditioned by climatic and environmental factors present between the 7th and 4th millennia B.C. in the Dobrudja region and beyond.

At the macrozonal level, the biogeocenoses present in Dobrudja proved to be extremely responsive to fluctuations in humidity and temperature during the above-mentioned chronological interval, the natural landscape adapting to climatic values. Although as a whole they follow the same general direction of evolution, at the microregional level the natural ecosystems are under the constant influence of local geomorphology and hydrography, capable of giving rise to regional ecological nuances.

At the same time, the Holocene temperature variations, smaller in amplitude than those at the end of the last glaciation, were strong enough to affect the Black Sea basin, causing the land to be flooded or inundated, the marine processes during the Holocene having a direct influence on the transformations of the hydrographic system, soil distribution, vegetation and geomorphology of the neighboring regions (Coteț, 1973, p. 148).

The climatic and environmental processes that took place during the last geological epoch in the north-western Black Sea region have been partially sketched in national and international studies, the concept being a general one, retouched each time by the emergence of the most recent data. Important efforts in this direction have been recorded in the whole territory of Dobrudja, both in Bulgaria and Romania, all benefiting from a multidisciplinary perspective.

On the one hand are known geological interventions that have analyzed and continue to study the defining geomorphological features of the region, including those of the Black Sea continental shelf, their role being to identify the geological factors that may have conditioned the occurrence of such changes. In addition, the perspective offered by these studies is complemented by the investigations of specialists in the sciences associated with archaeology (palynology, carpology, archaeozoology and anthropology, etc.) through the complementary perspective of climatic and ecological factors in the chronological interval under analysis.

We note the major contribution of all these scientific disciplines and of the experts belonging to these fields, who in most of the cases have joined forces to clarify the geoclimatic aspects of the area, with positive results.

## **IV. CHRONOLOGY AND MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE DOBRUDJA NEO-ENEOLITHIC**

### ***IV.1. HAMANGIA CULTURE***

The Hamangia culture is most likely the product of the migration phenomenon of some Anatolian Neolithic communities, which occurred at the end of the Hacilar culture, which generated profound movements among the Neolithic population settled in the Anatolian peninsula, eventually causing the migration of a significant percentage of the population.

The Anatolian groups of shepherds in search of resources for themselves and the animals that accompanied them favored the steppes of Dobrudja and settled here at the beginning of the Middle Neolithic.

### ***IV.2. BOIAN CULTURE***

The Boian culture occupies a vast area in both Romania and Bulgaria, with its epicenter in the vicinity of the lower course of the Danube, with settlements documented in the Black Sea coast (Haşotti, 1997), the Danube Delta (Comşa, 1954; Comşa, 1965; Comşa, 1974a; Micu, 2006) and in the submontane and mountainous regions (Comşa, 1954; Comşa, 1965; Comşa, 1974a).

The first Boian communities coming from south of the Danube penetrated the Gălăţui area, near Mostiştei and in the Olt river spillway. The groups initially settled in the Mostiştei valley continued to move westward to the vicinity of the Dâmboviţa and Neajlov rivers and northward to the Curb Subcarpathians and the Braşov depression (Comşa, 1954; Comşa, 1965; Pandrea, 1999). The communities near the lower course of the Olt River follow the upper course of the Olt, moving towards the Getic Subcarpathians (Comşa, 1965; Comşa, 1974a).

The peak of the propagation of the culture was reached in the Boian-Giuleşti phase, which according to E. Comşa resulted from the natural evolution of the Bolintineanu

communities settled north of the Danube (Comşa, 1957b; Comşa, 1974a). Later, in a relatively recent period, the hypothesis of a second wave of penetration and propagation of the Boian groups in the Romanian space was proposed, this time being the bearers of cultural values specific to the Giuleşti phase (Sîrbu *et alii*, 1997).

Under the pressure of the Vidra phase communities, coming from south of the Danube, the Giuleşti-Aldeni groups left their initial settlements and moved from the south-eastern part of the Romanian Plain to the north-eastern part of the relief unit, later moving to south-eastern Transylvania, Dobrudja and southern Moldavia (Galbenu, 1962; Comşa, 1965; Comşa, 1974a; Pandrea, 1999).

Through the evolution of the Vidra communities, the last phase of the Boian culture emerged. The aspect of the formation of the Spanţov phase is emphasized by the researches from the eponymous settlement (Morintz, Preda, 1959) and from Hârşova (Galbenu, 1962; Popovici *et alii*, 1992; Haşotti, 1997; Popovici *et alii*, 2000; Popovici *et alii*, 2001), Căscioarele (Dumitrescu, 1965; Dumitrescu, 1970) and Radovanu (Comşa, 1990). The Boian-Spanţov settlements are widely distributed in southern Muntenia, overlapping the area previously occupied by Vidra communities, but there is an exception for the Boian settlements in Dobrudja.

As far as the material elements belonging to the Boian culture reported in Dobrudja are concerned, they are few and have been discovered mostly in a series of archaeological sites scattered along the right bank of the Danube, in Cernavodă-*Columbia A*, Cernavodă-*Columbia C*, Cernavodă-*Columbia D*, Cernavodă-*Dealul Sofia*, Cernavodă-*Hinog*, Capidava, Hârşova-*tell*, Ghindăreşti, Sarichioi-*La Bursuci* and Isaccea-*Suhat*.

Similar discoveries were also made in the central Dobrudja area at Tariverde, Gura Dobrogei and in the Hamangia settlement at Cheia-*Vatra Satului*, as well as in the south of the region at Sokol-*Atmageaua Tătărăscă* and in the Durankulak necropolis.

In most cases, they are part of multiple archaeological contexts, being present together with the Hamangia and Gumelniţa archaeological materials, as is the case with the Boian-Giuleşti pottery fragments found in the Hamangia cultural levels at Cernavodă-*Columbia A*, *C* and *D* and in the north of Dobrudja at Isaccea-*Suhat*, those from the Boian-Vidra phase at Cernavodă-*Sofia*, Cernavodă-*Hinog*, Hârşova-*tell* and Capidava and the Boian-Spanţov type pottery from Sokol-*Atmageaua Tătărăscă*, Sarichioi-*La Bursuci*, Hârşova-*tell*, from the necropolis of Durankulak and the Gura Dobrogei cave.

### **IV.3. GUMELNIŢA - KARANOVŌ VI - KODJADERMEN CULTURAL COMPLEX**

The formation, evolution and spread of the Gumelnița - Karanovo VI - Kodjadermen cultural phenomenon is a widely analyzed and discussed issue.

In the relatively recent period the idea of the formation of the Gumelnitsa - Karanovo VI - Kodjadermen cultural complex on the pre-existing Eneolithic background in the Balkan-Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic area represented by the cultures of Boian, Hamangia, Vădastra, Marița, Karanovo V, Sava, Gradeșnica and Polyanitsa, from which it took on a series of particularities that resulted in the constitution of regional variants<sup>5</sup>.

In the Romanian area, the Gumelnița - Karanovo VI - Kodjadermen cultural area broadly overlaps with the area of evolution of the Boian culture in Muntenia, spreading into Dobrudja in the area previously occupied by representatives of the Hamangia culture, and there is also evidence of an expansion in the south of the Republic of Moldova.

At the same time, it occupies most of the eastern part of Bulgaria, stretching both north and south of the Balkan Peninsula, as far as the Aegean Sea.

The question of when the cultural manifestations of the Gumelnița - Karanovo VI - Kodjadermen type began in Dobrudja is guided by a series of complex cultural auspices pre-existing in the Dobrudja region, which decisively influenced the evolution of culture in this area.

The decisive role in the phenomenon of the formation of the Gumelnitsa culture both on the left bank of the Danube and in Dobrudja was played by the communities of the Boian-Spanțov phase<sup>6</sup> relatively well represented in this Dobrudja region (Comșa, 1972; Comșa, 1974a). The fact that the cultural transition from Boian to Gumelnița took place naturally is supported by the stratigraphy of the final Boian strata and the Gumelnița A1 levels of the Hârșova *tell*, as well as by the technique and typology of Boian tools, dwellings and pottery found in the Gumelnița material culture (Galbenu, 1962; Popovici *et alii*, 1992; Hașotti, 1988-1989; Hașotti, 1997; Popovici *et alii*, 2000; Popovici *et alii*, 2014).

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<sup>5</sup> North-Danubian, Dobrudja, South-Balkan variants, to which we can add the Stoicani-Aldeni cultural aspect spread in north-eastern Wallachia, south-eastern Moldavia and east of the Prut, in the area neighboring the northern Danube.

<sup>6</sup> In northeastern Bulgaria, the genesis of the Gumelnița culture was under the profound influence of the Boian, Karanovo V and to a lesser extent the Hamangia cultural backgrounds.

Beyond this, the Hamangia culture also had a contribution, albeit not as significant as that of the Boian culture in the formation of the Gumelnița culture in Dobrudja<sup>7</sup> (Galbenu, 1962; Hașotti, 1988-1989; Hașotti, 1997).

The evolution of the culture took place during two phases Gumelnița A (sub-phases A1 and A2) and Gumelnița B (sub-phases B1 and B2), sub-phases A1, A2 and B1 being supported by a range of material and stratigraphic information, in contrast to sub-phase Gumelnița B2.

Concerning the question of the so-called Varna culture whose existence is mainly supported by Henrieta Todorova<sup>8</sup> and partly by the Romanian archaeologist E. Comșa (Comșa, 1962b; Comșa, 1972), we consider that it is at least contradictory, the Bulgarian researcher admitting in one of her works (Todorova, Toncheva, 1975) on the discoveries made to Ezero that the so-called Varna culture is only a zonal cultural aspect of the Gumelnița - Karanovo VI - Kodjadermen cultural complex.

The argument of the existence of a local aspect of this type and with such particularities in Dobrudja is also accepted by P. Hașotti, who considers that the Sava culture played an important role in its genesis, the aspect having originated in a chronological period prior to the Gumelnița A1 phase, the chronological advance being, however, minor (Hașotti, 1988-1989, p. 18; Hașotti, 1997, p. 73). However, if we consider the 14C data dating the Karanovo VI and Varna cultures, we note the lack of chronological differences between the two (4,550/4,500 - 4,100/4,050 cal. B.C.) (Hașotti, 1997), which emphasizes the simultaneity of the two.

The end of the Gumelnița culture in Dobrudja occurred at an earlier chronological level (the end of the Gumelnița A2 phase) compared to the rest of the cultural complex, occurring under the pressure of representatives of the Cernavoda I culture coming from the northern Pontic Steppes.

#### ***IV.4. CERNAVODA I CULTURE***

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<sup>7</sup> In two of his studies P. Hașotti (Hașotti, 1988-1989; Hașotti, 1997) formulates the existence of a local aspect of the Gumelnița culture in Dobrudja, under the influence of the final Hamangia phase, which was manifested throughout the entire duration of the Gumelnița A1 cultural stage.

<sup>8</sup> The author even affirms the penetration of the left bank of the Danube by the representatives of the so-called culture, as far as the south of the Republic of Moldova. The authors (Todorova, 1978; Todorova, 1979; Todorova, 1984; Todorova, 1986; Todorova, 1995) and other well-known researchers of the cultural phenomenon Todor Dimov, Ivan Ivanov, Javor Bojadžiev.



Situated on the chronological boundary between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, the Cernavoda I culture marks the transition from the values typical of the Neolithic cultures present in south-eastern Europe to those that define the cultural manifestations specific to the Early Bronze Age in the same regions.

The spread of the Cernavoda I culture goes beyond the natural limits of Dobrudja, reaching as far as the south of the Republic of Moldova, north-eastern and southern Muntenia, south-eastern Oltenia and north-eastern Bulgaria, which allowed the establishment of exchange relations not only with representatives of the Cucuteni cultures (phases A4 and A-B) but also with those of the cultures of Usatovo, Foltești, Sălcuța, Bodrogkeresztur, Suplevec, Ezero, etc.

The penetration of the Cernavoda I elements into the Danubian area happened in all probability very quickly and even in an aggressive way, the cultural expansion tempering with their advance into south-eastern Europe, the homogeneity of the cultural wave is lost and the long scattered Cernavoda I tribes come to meet the local cultural nuclei that will eventually assimilate them as well<sup>9</sup>.

To the intrinsic cultural characteristics (the use of ochre, the use of channeled pottery, the zoomorphic stone scepters, the tumular burials, etc.) will be added those taken from Gumelnița culture (techniques for building houses and producing tools, etc.).

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The first proper archaeological investigations in Dobrudja started at the end of the 19th century in the period immediately after the Romanian War of Independence and the annexation of Dobrudja. It was a period when little was known about the prehistoric background of the region, but the situation gradually changed through and with the efforts of some of the great names of Romanian classical archaeology (Grigore Tocilescu, Pamfil Polonic, Vasile Pârvan, Ioan Andrieșescu, Dimitrie Teodorescu, George Mateescu, Ion Nestor, Vladimir Dumitrescu *et alii*).

Over the years, the results have continued to emerge, with more and more prehistoric and especially Neo-Neolithic sites being discovered, eventually leading to the creation of a vast informational fund on human and cultural manifestations of this historical period.

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<sup>9</sup> The case of the Oltenia, Goruja, Tuzla and Suplevec-Bakarno Gumno finds (Hașotti, 1997, p. 122).

Over time, investigative procedures and research methodologies have become increasingly complex by adapting them to the specificity of the period and adopting interdisciplinary methods capable of explaining the particularities encountered.

In conclusion, the research of the Neo-Eneolithic in Dobrudja means almost 150 years of efforts and involvement of researchers and students of the universities of our country and Bulgaria, who have managed throughout this long period to clarify a number of cultural aspects specific to the cultures of Hamangia, Boian, Gumelnița - Karanovo VI - Kodjadermen and Cernavoda I.

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